

*The Story*  
UP TO NOW

*The Library of Congress*

1800—1946





PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY  
AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

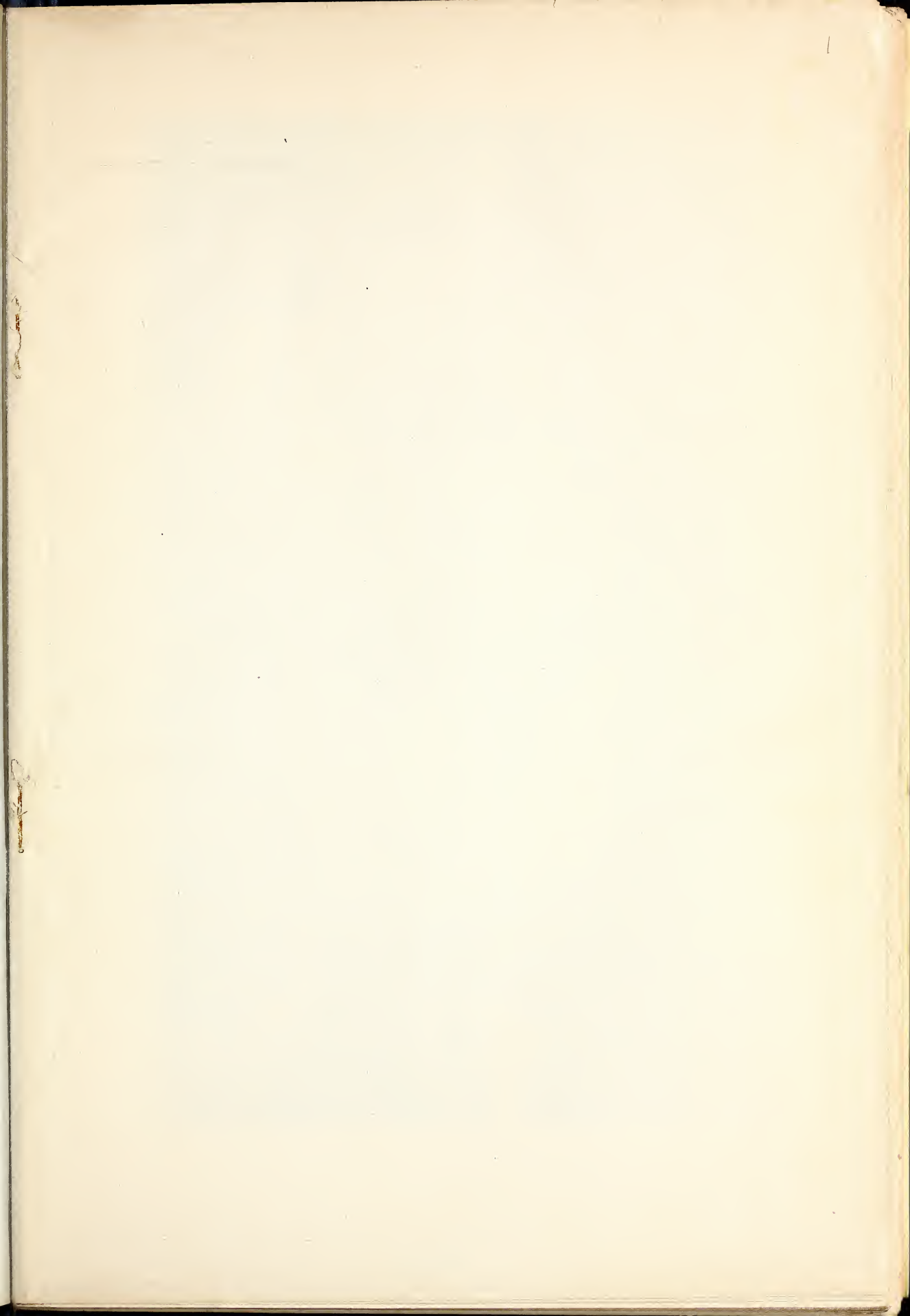




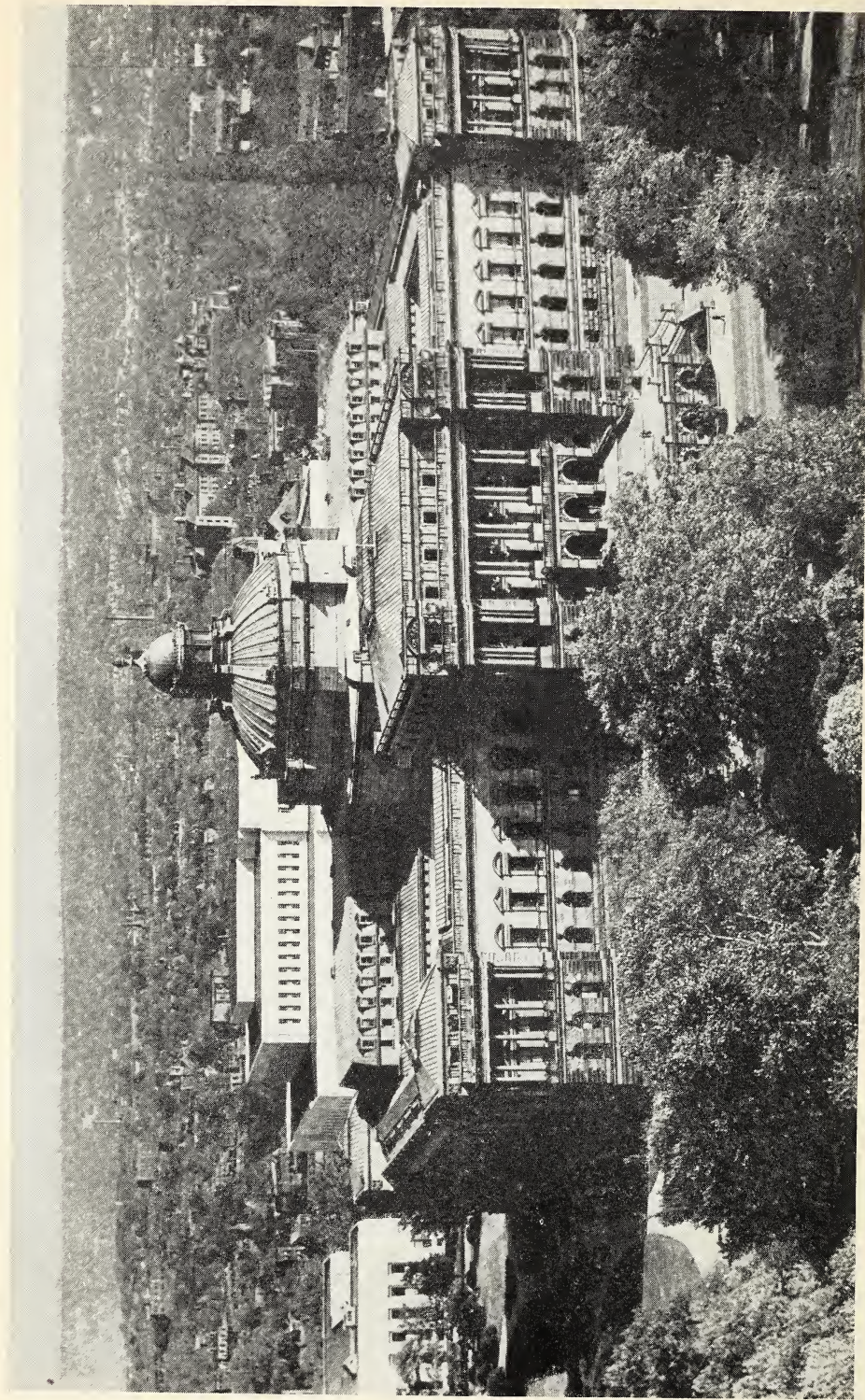












*A general view of the Main Building of the Library of Congress as it appears today from the Capitol. Portions of the Annex Building and the Folger Shakespeare Library (at the left) are visible.*



*The Story*  
UP TO NOW

*The Library of Congress*

1800—1946

*By*

DAVID C. MEARNS

*Director, Reference Department*

Washington, 1947

PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY  
AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY



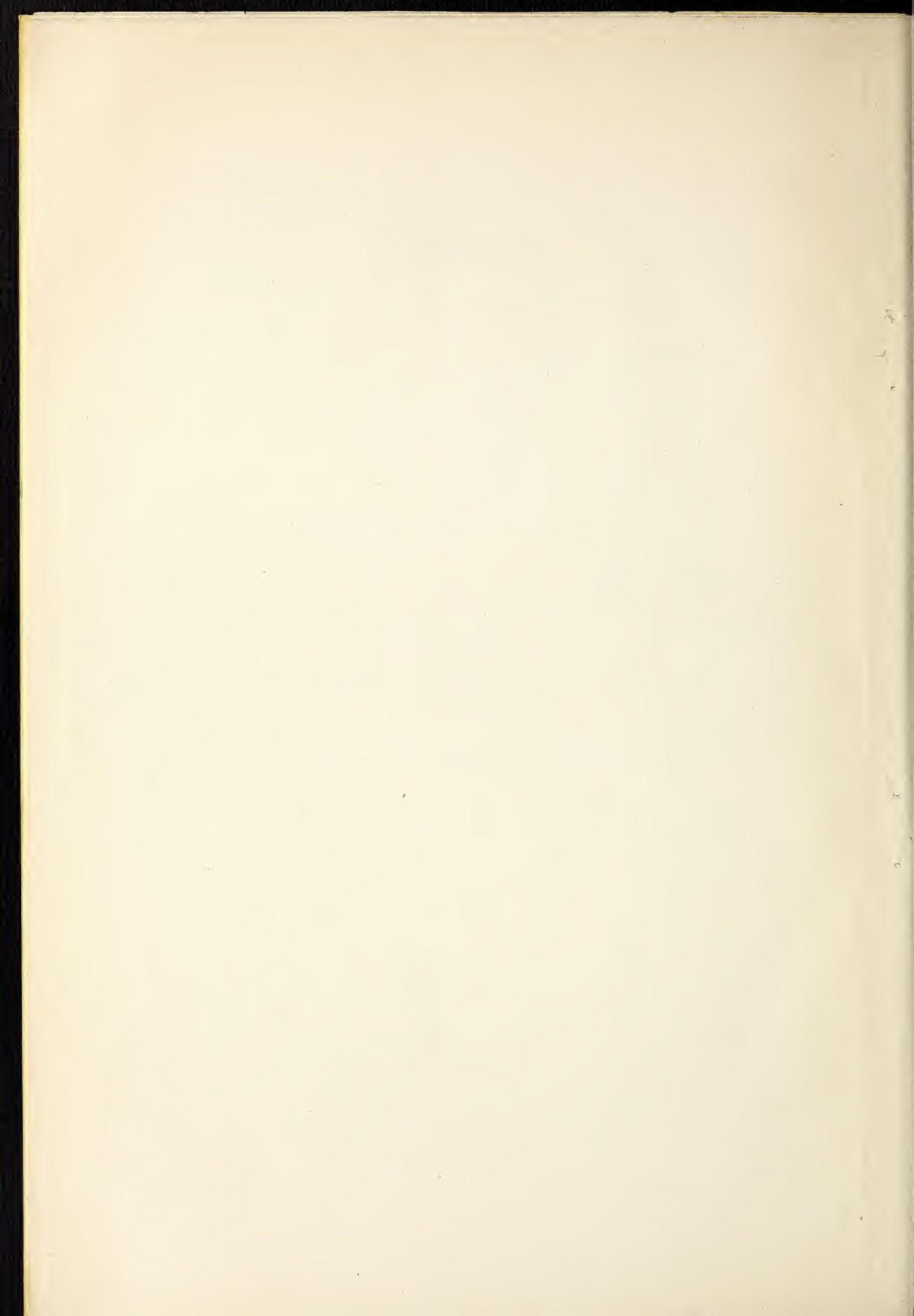
REPRINTED FROM THE  
*ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS*  
FOR THE  
*FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1946*  
WITH THE  
ADDITION OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND A SLIGHT REVISION OF TEXT

100 10 101



# Contents

THE STORY UP TO NOW.....	Page 1
ILLUSTRATIONS	
The Main Library Building.....	Frontis.
The invoice and bill of lading of December 9, 1800.....	8
Architect's drawing of the "Iron Room" in the Capitol.....	66
"Scene in the Old Congressional Library" from <i>Harper's Weekly</i> , February 27, 1897.....	116
Construction of the Main Library Building.....	124
The Figure of Commerce.....	126
Decorative work for the new building.....	128
The Main Reading Room.....	144
The Representatives Reading Room.....	188
The transfer of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.....	192
A typical bookstack.....	198
The Annex Building.....	206
One of the Jefferson murals.....	214
INDEX.....	217



# The Story Up to Now



## *The Peace of Great Phantoms Be for You*

The Library of Congress was a long time aborning but the quest for origins leads straight to New York's Wall Street where, at the corner of Nassau, the Jacobean City Hall had lately been refurbished, according to the plans of Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, French artist, engineer, and Revolutionary veteran, for the accommodation of the "general government." There the First Congress of the United States was convened and there on August 6, 1789, Elbridge Gerry, one of eight Representatives from Massachusetts, rose from his place to introduce a motion. A native of Marblehead, graduate at eighteen from Harvard College, formerly a member of the Continental Congress (where he had signed the Declaration of Independence) and a Delegate to the Federal Convention (where he had steadfastly refused to affix his signature to the new Constitution), Mr. Gerry had already established on both sides of the aisle a reputation as a man of parts, who stoutly believed it to be "the duty of every man though he may have but one day to live to devote that day to the good of his country."

Mr. Gerry was to survive for a quarter of a century, and was subsequently to become Minister to France, Governor of Massachusetts, and Vice President of the United States, but his act of patriotism for that eighteenth century Thursday was

to move "that a committee be appointed to report a catalogue of books necessary for the use of Congress, with an estimate of the expense, and the best mode of procuring them."

The motion lay comfortably on the table until the following spring, when on April 30, a committee, consisting of Mr. Gerry, Aedanus Burke, of South Carolina, and Alexander White, of Virginia, was appointed for the purpose.

Judge Burke had been born in County Galway, educated at the theological college in St. Omer, France, and, following a visit to the West Indies, had emigrated to Charleston where, after service in the militia during the early years of the Revolution, he had been appointed a judge of the state circuit court. His purple obituary, which appeared in the *City Gazette* for April 2, 1802, glistens with such phrases as "In his pure and elevated mind every consideration was deemed subordinate to the freedom and happiness of man"—"His enmities were like those of other men, but his friendships were eternal"—"His acquirements as a scholar, were extensive, classical and erudite. In the walks of history and jurisprudence, and the regions of elegant literature, his attainments were equal and commensurate."—"There was something in him formed for great occasions and splendid exertion."—"Eccentricities at times he had—They were of an agreeable cast, generally harmless, always variable, and appeared but as the coruscations of elevated and uncommon endowments."



"He was an enlightened liberal and genuine republican."

Alexander White was generally regarded as the outstanding leader of western Virginia and one of the ablest lawyers in the United States. Born in Frederick County, son of a former surgeon in the English Navy who had married into a pioneer family, he was educated at the University of Edinburgh, and studied law in London, first at the Inner Temple and later at Gray's Inn. Upon his return to this country, in 1765, he served almost continuously as King's or State's attorney. He took little part in the Revolutionary struggle, but was active in securing the ratification of the Federal Constitution. It is not quite certain that that First Congress and its work meant a fulfillment of his ambitions, for while he was participating in its affairs he confided in a letter (albeit in a letter to a lady) "to associate with the great men of the earth, and to share in the Government of an Empire, to me has no charms."

On Wednesday, June 23, 1790, Mr. Gerry, in behalf of the committee, reported to the House. *The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States* are silent concerning its contents and only record the fact that it "was ordered to lie on the Table." Fortunately, however, *The Gazette of the United States* supplied the text; the following paragraphs of which seem to have a particular relevance:

. . . That, as far as the nature of the case will admit, they have in the schedule annexed, complied with the order of the house, having due regard to the state of the treasury.

That, the committee have confined themselves, in a great measure, to books necessary for the use of the legislative and executive departments, and not often to be found in private or circulating libraries.

That, nevertheless, without further provision of books on laws and government, to which reference is often necessary, members of the legislature and other officers of government may be either deprived of the use of such books when necessary,

or be obliged at every session to transport to the seat of the general government a considerable part of their libraries; it seldom happening that they can otherwise command such books when requisite, without trespassing too much on the indulgence of their friends. The committee are therefore of the opinion that a sum not exceeding 1,000 dollars be appropriated in the present session, and that the sum of 500 dollars be hereafter annually appropriated to the purchase of books for a public library, and applied to the purpose by the Vice President, Chief Justice and Secretary of State of the United States, without confining them to the catalogue reported until in the opinion of Congress, the books provided shall be adequate to the purpose.

This, the first official proposal for the establishment of a Library of Congress, is clear on several points: (1) it is clear that the committee contemplated a library for the Government in all its branches, the legislative, the executive and the judicial, and, to the extent that all activities related to the Federal establishment are national activities, it contemplated the formation of a National Library; (2) it is clear also that the committee doubted the present or future adequacy of merely local resources to meet the needs of transacting the people's business; (3) it is, finally, clear that the committee conceived of the possibility of creating a fixed and permanent collection upon the basis of a self-liquidating enterprise. It is less apparent, but it may be implied that the Congress, as online begetter, was to have first (though by no means exclusive) call upon the works of these "sundry authors on the laws of nature and nations." One phrase in the report must be read in its eighteenth century meaning; a "public" library was not public at all by modern standards but was actually a subscription or proprietary library in which a relatively small part of the community formed a corporation and made financial investments in exchange for the privilege of borrowing books from a jointly owned stock.

*Our Union Does Not Require It*

But why was this report tabled? Why was the proposal permitted to languish for a decade? Why was an effort which reflected so much initiative and foresight and conscientious application set aside? There are several possible explanations.

In the first place, there were those who found the idea either frivolous or unrelated to the immediate concerns of a wise and representative democracy. Typical of this attitude was an anonymous contributor to the *Independent Chronicle* of Boston, who over the signature of "An Observer" let go with a terrific blast in the issue for May 13, 1790:

... The late motion respecting the "Library" for Congress, is truly novel—could it be supposed that a measure so distant from any thing which can effect the general purposes of government, could be introduced at this important period? Could any thing be more foreign to the real business of Congress? What connection has a Library with the public? With our Commerce; or with any other national concern?—How absurd to squander away money for a parcel of Books, when every shilling of the Revenue is wanted for supporting our government and paying our debts? How preposterous to originate such a mode to lay out money, more particularly at a time when the utmost stretch of the Treasurer's genius is exerted to provide for the *necessary exigencies* of the government? Provided this motion is adopted, when can we expect to compleat a system of finance? The Treasurer having made no provision, in his report for such an application, additional ways and means therefore must be devised, in order to raise money for this purpose—the question then is, shall our trade be burthened with an additional Impost, to furnish a Library to amuse men who are sent to do the business of the continent.

It is supposed that the Members of Congress are acquainted with history; the laws of nations; and possess such political information as is necessary for the management of the affairs of the government. If they are *not*, we have been unfortunate in our choice—or, should they need the assistance of Books upon any particular subject, they are able to furnish themselves *with little expence* at the circulating Library in the city where they reside. But why the States should be at this expence, and

the time of Congress taken up in arranging a body of Books for a public Library at this important period, is a piece of policy which no person can reconcile upon any principle of propriety, or expediency.

The motion however seems to claim a *right*, which appears Congress are not empowered to exercise. "*The Powers of Congress*" do not give them this privilege. The design and end of the Constitution are for quite different purposes, than for the amusement, or even instruction of Congress. I would ask wherein is a public Library conducive to the purposes mentioned in the preamble of the Constitution? Our Union does not require it—neither does the establishment of justice—the promotion of the general welfare; the security of liberty to ourselves and posterity. All these are the great objects of the government, but it is supposed that the members are fully competent for these purposes, without being at the expence of furnishing them with Books for their improvement. They may with equal propriety charge the public with all the expence of their cloathing, boarding &c. as to touch the Revenue for Books for their own convenience, entertainment or instruction. The people look for *practical politicks*, as they presume the *Theory* is obtained previous to the members taking their seats in Congress.

Perhaps these considerations of "practical politicks," entertained by subjects worthy of the pen of William Blades, prevailed and forced the abandonment of the proposal. Or again, the collapse may be explained by a loss of interest on the part of the chairman of the committee. Professor Morison, of Harvard, in a penetrating study of Elbridge Gerry has discussed the conflict of the gentleman and the democrat in his nature; a conflict which made him vacillate, carry water on both shoulders, sometimes, change sides. He may have lost interest, for it cannot be without significance that no reference to this episode is found among Gerry's surviving papers. John Adams once complained directly of Gerry's "obstinacy which will risk great things to secure small ones," and another lifelong associate wrote to Jefferson that Gerry was a "Grumble-tonian" who "objected to everything he



did not propose." This suggests that he may merely have acted perfunctorily in response to the urging of another, and actually cared very little whether the plan gained acceptance or not.

But the most satisfactory explanation of the moratorium derives from the history of the New York Society Library, a corporation chartered by George III and composed of divers merchants, lawyers, physicians, printers, apothecaries, distillers and "gentlemen," whose collections had been dispersed during the War for Independence, and had been only lately re-established (in the number of some four thousand volumes) in "the uppermost Room in the South East part of the City Hall" where their continued occupancy was conditioned on the complete convenience of their fellow tenants, "the Gen'l Gov't of the United States." This hazard appears to have been removed by extending the full privileges of the Society to the Members of the National Legislature, and the Society's librarian, the Reverend George Wright, a native of Ireland, rector of the Episcopal Church in Brooklyn, once described as "of rather slender constitution," became in fact, though not in title, the first Librarian of Congress.

#### *Of Furnishings, Footways and Foundations*

The third session of the First Congress met in Philadelphia and there, on Wednesday, January 19, 1791, there was communicated to the Senate a resolution recently adopted by the directors of the Library Company in that city, providing "that the President and Members of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States shall have free use of the books in the Library in as full and ample manner as if they were members of the company." To those who had sat in the "Old," or Continental, Congress this generous action was welcomed as a

renewal of privileges formerly enjoyed and highly prized. As early as August 31, 1774, when the Company was soon to receive the Congress as its joint tenant of Carpenters' Hall, the Librarian had been instructed to "furnish the Gentlemen who are to meet in Congress in this City, with the use of such Books as they may have occasion for during their sitting, taking a Receipt for them."

And those who had served as Delegates during Constitutional Summer may have remembered a motion of thanks which they had adopted on July 7, 1787, upon receiving word that "the gentlemen who compose the Convention" had been authorized to draw "such books as they may desire during their continuance at Philadelphia."

Now the New Government had again been assured of recourse to the impressive collection (recently installed in its elegant new home on Fifth Street) which the late Dr. Franklin had done so much to found, to foster and to form. It was not surprising that "General" Washington's private secretary, Tobias Lear, should acknowledge so important a courtesy "in obedience to the commands of the President of the United States."

Thus it was that the Members of the American Congress, first as champions of a revolutionary cause, now as the chosen representatives of a free and independent and terribly isolated people, had come, for their endeavors, to depend upon those guides to experience and example which are contained in books. Thus it was also, that for a while they considered themselves relieved of the onerous necessity of fashioning a special library of their own. But gradually the requirements of the legislative process for immediate recourse to authority became so pressing that certain standard works had to be acquired. In the fall of 1794, the Secretary was ordered to purchase copies of Blackstone's *Com-*



mentaries and Vattel's *Law of Nature and Nations* "for the use of the Senate," and from time to time both Houses appear to have added to their routine equipment about fifty titles including such publications as the poems of Robert Burns, Dr. Rush on *Yellow Fever*, Hume's *History of England*, Reeves and Wooddeson on English law, several treatises on elections, Morse's *American Geography*, Varlo's *Husbandry*, Chalmers' *Collection of Treaties*, and two or three periodicals.

It is reasonable to suppose that those who had opposed the Gerry proposal came slowly to discard their skepticism regarding the relationship of literature to law; toward this reversal of viewpoint they were propelled both by the development of their own practice and by the prospect of a radically altered situation.

There were no libraries in the Potomac Marshes, and in the spring of 1800 the Congress was confronted with the eminently practical and inescapable consideration of its imminent removal to the new "Federal City," which was to be the "permanent seat of government."

Something of the sort may have been in the mind of young Harrison Gray Otis, of Massachusetts, then serving his second term in the House of Representatives when on Thursday, March 20, he introduced a resolution calling for the appointment of a committee "to consider what measures are expedient for Congress to adopt, preparatory to the removal of the seat of government, with leave to report by bill or otherwise." On the following day, the question was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and its chairman, Robert Goodloe Harper, who was also the Federalist leader, reported on March 24 "a bill making further provision for the removal and accommodation of the Government of the United States; which was twice read and committed to the whole House." On April 2, the House "resolved

itself into a Committee" to discuss it, and "considerable conversation occurred" with reference to the section which contained an appropriation for furnishing the President's House. After some time, John Rutledge, Jr. sought to put an end to the debate by moving "that the Committee rise, in order that time may be given for learning the amount of money wanting for this object, and because he supposed the Chairman of the Committee, who was absent, might be able to give that information." The proceedings must have been very confusing for the *Annals* report that "the motion was afterwards withdrawn, but renewed by the Speaker, and at length carried."

Mr. Harper was in his seat on Friday, April 4, when the debate was resumed. In the interval which had elapsed since he had originally introduced the legislation he had been gravely disturbed by "some Constitutional doubts," because that controlling instrument prescribed, as he put it, that "the salary of the President should receive no addition nor diminution during his being in office." As a consequence, he proposed, and his colleagues concurred in, language which so amended the act "that the sum to accommodate the household of the President . . . should not operate until after the third of March next." The question then turned to the amount of money which should be allowed for that purpose. Sums of \$20,000, \$15,000, and \$10,000 "were severally named," but a State Rights Democrat, John Randolph, of Roanoke, who considered "the principle itself unconstitutional, moved, in order to defeat the section altogether (it having been amended and being out of order to move its being stricken out) to insert the sum of \$500." By a vote of 44 to 42 it was agreed to settle on \$15,000. Mr. Harper then proposed an appropriation of \$1,000 to cover the expense of removing the public property already "appertaining

to the household of the President to the Federal City."

Thereafter Congressman Dwight Foster, of Massachusetts, moved to strike out the fifth section which allotted \$10,000 to pave the streets of Washington, but that was "negatived, only 21 rising for it."

The debate continued; James Asheton Bayard, of Delaware presented a successful motion that the secretaries of the executive departments rather than the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House should be responsible for the suitable accommodation of the Congress. Samuel Smith, of Maryland, moved a new section, which was carried, allowing one quarter additional salary to "the clerks of several offices of the Departments of State, Treasury, War, Navy and General Post Office" to cover the expenses involved in transferring their personal effects to the District of Columbia. Then \$9,000 were appropriated "to furnish the two Chambers of Congress, offices, committee rooms &c."

The House, as a Committee of the Whole, "rose when Mr. [Albert] Gallatin [a diehard] moved to strike out the second section, which provided \$15,000 to accommodate the President's House with furniture." He took this action, so he declared, "not because it would not be necessary to appropriate something, but he said what that something might be, would be better ascertained by waiting for the proper estimates, and until Congress moved there, when as much as should appear necessary might be appropriated, since it was not to come into use until after the 3d of March." On a rising vote his motion was lost, and "the bill being gone through was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading on Monday."

And so, on Monday, April 7, the bill passed the House and was sent to the Senate, where on the following day it was referred to a committee consisting of James

Ross, of Pennsylvania, James Lloyd, of Maryland, and James Hillhouse, of Connecticut. On Saturday, April 12, Senator Ross, for the three Jameses, reported the bill with amendments, on the 15th it received some attention, and on the 17th the Senate resumed its consideration with the result that the second section of the House bill (which related to the expenditures for fitting out the Executive Mansion) was amended and the third and fifth sections were stricken out. In this form the Senate concurred in the bill, and returned it to the House where it was agreed to on Tuesday, April 22. Two days later President John Adams "did approve and sign it." The only point at issue, a point on which there had been a division on strictly party lines, was whether he should have the pleasure of reclining on a new chair, resting on a new bed, or dining at a new table.

As it left the House the bill had contained eight sections, but due to the changes made in the Senate, the interesting seventh section had become the fifth in the new law. Because of its importance to this study it is cited in full—

. . . That for the purchase of such books as may be necessary for the use of Congress at the said city of Washington, and for fitting up a suitable apartment for containing them, and for placing them therein the sum of five thousand dollars shall be, and hereby is appropriated; and that the said purchase shall be made by the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives, pursuant to such directions as shall be given, and such catalogue as shall be furnished, by a joint committee of both Houses of Congress to be appointed for that purpose; and that the said books shall be placed in one suitable apartment in the capitol in the said city, for the use of both Houses of Congress and the Members thereof, according to such regulations as the Committee aforesaid shall devise and establish.

And so, as part of an appropriation for furniture and footways, the Library of Congress was founded. It has been said (and it has been repeated) that its father was Senator Samuel Livermore, of New



Hampshire, one of the most forceful and picturesque personages of the period. A native of Waltham, Massachusetts, he had entered the College of New Jersey at nineteen and had taken his degree in one year. Later he had studied law and, at twenty-four, he had been admitted to the bar. For a brief time he had practiced his profession in his home town, but soon removed to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where he had established a reputation as a plainspoken and energetic lawyer, and where he secured the warm friendship of the "royal agent, Governor Wentworth." Subsequently he had withdrawn to the Scotch-Irish township of Derry, which he had represented in the General Assembly and, in 1769, had been appointed Judge-Advocate in the Admiralty Court and attorney-general, a circumstance which had recalled him to Portsmouth. In 1775 he had settled permanently in Holderness, where he had purchased more than two-thirds of the township, had built a "great house," a church and a gristmill, and had become known in the neighborhood as the Squire.

In 1776, he had been elected attorney-general of the State, and almost continuously thereafter he had held state offices, "sometimes, indeed, filling two offices at once." He had served three terms in the National House of Representatives, and at the time of the passage of the act of April 24, 1800, he was serving his second term in the United States Senate. It is reported that "on his kitchen table, there was always a great iron basket and a huge pottery pitcher, the basket filled with corn-and-rye bread, and the pitcher with cider, free to all passers-by."

Certainly Squire Livermore was rich enough, rich in property, rich in honors and rich in the affections and admiration of his community. Why burden him with more?

The parenthood of the Library of Con-

gress seems first to have been thrust upon him by Benjamin Perley Poore. Printer, diplomat, archivist, journalist, army major in the Civil War, public servant, bibliophile, and (save the mark!) documents cataloger, he was a buoyant personality and a gifted raconteur, who, as forfeit when Millard Fillmore had failed to carry Massachusetts in the presidential election of 1856, had wheeled a barrel of apples from Newburyport to the statehouse in Boston to the delight of cheering crowds who lined the streets. In 1872, Poore wrote an article on the Library of Congress for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* which was published in the December issue; it contained this statement:

. . . When, in 1800, Congress made final provision for the removal and accommodation of the government of the United States at Conococheague (as the site of the District of Columbia had been called by the Indians), or Roaring Brook, the more intelligent members took care to provide for the commencement of a library. On the motion of Samuel Livermore, a graduate of Princeton College, then a Senator from New Hampshire, \$5,000 were appropriated for the purchase of books and for fitting up a suitable apartment in the new Capitol as a library.

Other, and usually careful, historians have copied this ascription of responsibility. For example, William Dawson Johnston in his *History of the Library of Congress, 1800-1864*, repeats it almost verbatim: "So on motion of Samuel Livermore, a graduate of Princeton, then Senator from New Hampshire, a fifth section was added to the 'Act . . .'" Actually, of course, as the history of the act proves beyond what may be termed a "peradventure," Senator Livermore had nothing more to do with the establishment of the Library of Congress than the gentleman in the moon. The provision for the Library had been part of the legislation as it had passed the House; that clause was neither debated nor amended in either Chamber; finally, the

Squire of Holderness went so far as to vote against the bill when it passed the Senate.

Thus the distinction for having created the great Library which bears the name of Congress properly belongs to that other Princetonian, first proponent of the bill, by which it came to being, Robert Goodloe Harper. When he died, William Wirt, Attorney General of the United States, delivered a eulogy before the Baltimore County Court, in which these words were summary of his stature: "If one of the most clear, comprehensive and powerful minds, replenished with the richest stores of the most various knowledge, combined with one of the best, the purest, and the kindest of hearts, a deportment, at once frank, manly, courteous and graceful, and an energy of character which rendered him constantly active in the exercise of every public and private virtue, can make a great man—then we may say, indeed, 'a great man has fallen in Israel.'" The students of Library patristics will remember and agree.

### *Eleven Hair Trunks and a Case for the Maps*

It cannot be pretended that the act of 1800, an act, by the way, which was passed without the benefit of "enabling" legislation, anticipated any action so formidable as the formation of a national collection, organized for a national service. On the contrary in precise language, identical with the language of the Gerry proposal of 1789, it provided for the acquisition of books "necessary for the use of Congress." Although it required "a suitable apartment for containing them" and directed the appointment of a joint committee to "devise and establish" regulations governing their selection and circulation, it studiously refrained from referring to them as a library and did nothing to create an

officer who should be immediately responsible for their custody and service.

On the other hand, it is possible to assume that the founding fathers conceived of their prospective books as constituting a proprietary library, such as the libraries they had known in the other capitals of the Republic. Now, however, there would be this difference: Membership would be limited to Members of the Congress, the joint committee would perform the function of directors, and stock in the corporation would be purchased from the public purse. Subsequent action would seem to confirm this view.

The Library of Congress has not "evolved into . . . an international library;" it began as one.

On the day after the President had approved the act, the House appointed its members of the Joint Committee, Robert Waln, of Pennsylvania, Thomas Evans and Leven Powell, both of Virginia. Three days later the Senate followed suit with the designation of Samuel Dexter, of Massachusetts, William Bingham, of Pennsylvania, and Wilson Cary Nicholas, of Virginia. The Committee seems promptly to have set about its business and to have secured a catalogue of desiderata. According to the undocumented statement of Benjamin Perley Poore, the chairman, Senator Dexter, was "the only member . . . who has left behind him any trace of a fondness for or acquaintance with books," and William Dawson Johnston so completely accepted that verdict that he quoted it *verbatim et literatim*. In this, they were not altogether accurate: both gentlemen from Pennsylvania had had some experience in such matters; Senator Bingham had been a director of the Philadelphia Library Company from 1792 to 1793, while Congressman Waln, was then serving the Company in that capacity for a second year and was to continue so to serve it until 1836. (He





Sold by  
Barber & Smith,  
Stationers,  
Sweeting's Alley,  
LONDON.

Dec. 9, 1800

SHIPPED, by the Grace of God, in good Order and well-conditioned, by *Samuel Davis*

in and upon the good Ship called the *American*  
whereof is Master, under God, for this present Voyage, *Charles Mason*  
and now riding at Anchor in the *River Thames* and by God's Grace bound  
for *Baltimore*, to say,

*Eleven Trunks and one Case*  
*of Printed Books*

*Wm. Probst Gilman*  
*of London, Baltimore*

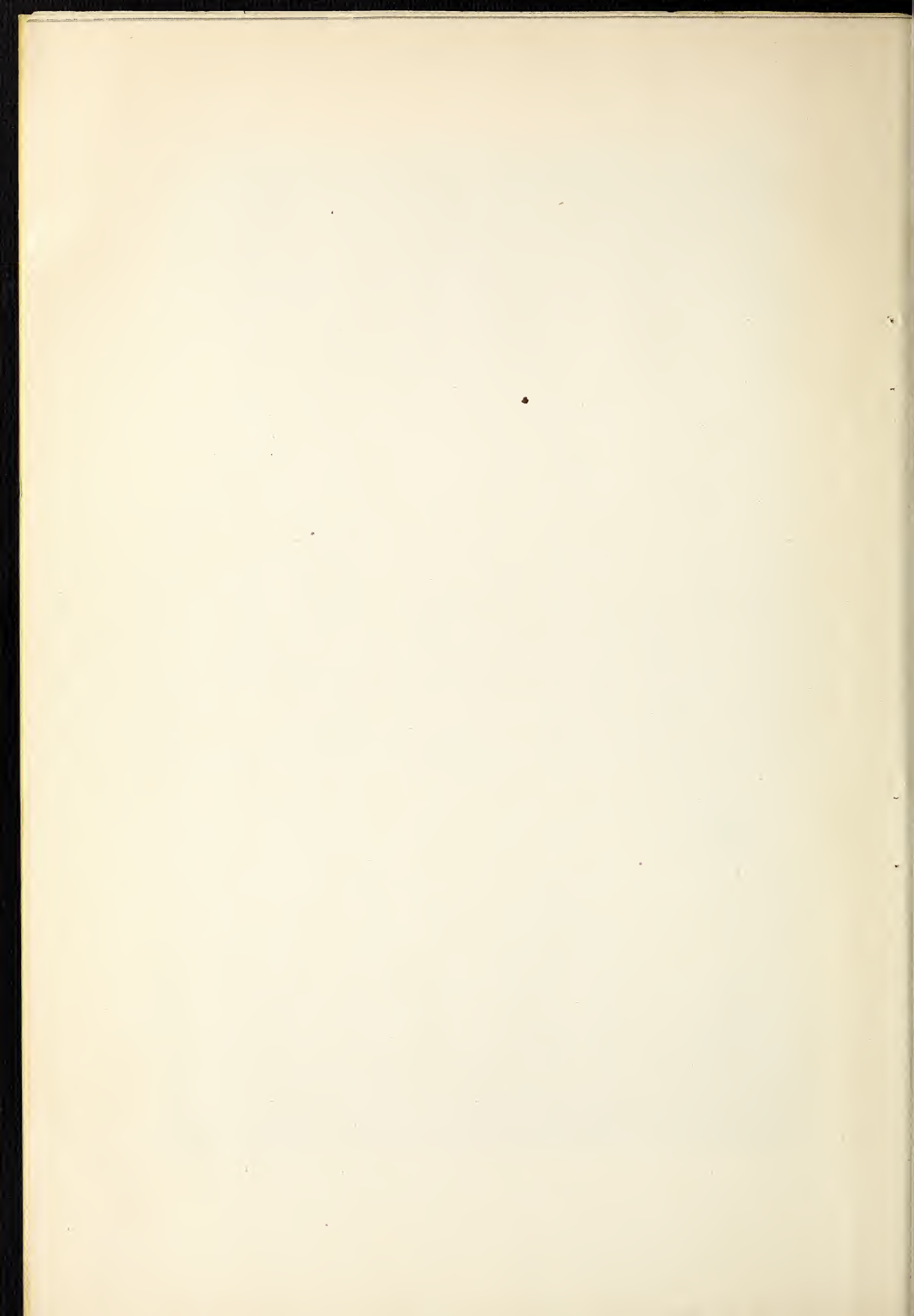
*No. 1 to 12*

being marked and numbered as in the Margin, and are to be delivered in the like good Order and well-conditioned, at the aforelaid Port of *Baltimore* (the Act of God, the King's Enemies, Fire, and all and every other Dangers and Accidents of the Seas, Rivers, and Navigation, of whatever Nature and Kind soever, save Risk of Boats, so far as Ships are liable thereto, excepted) unto *Robert Gilman & Sons* or to *their assigns*, he or they paying Freight for the said Goods being paid

with Primage and Average accustomed. In Witness whereof the said Master of the said Ship hath affirmed to *four* Bills of Lading, all of this Tenor and Date; the One of which *four* Bills being accomplished, the other *three* to stand void. And so God fend the good Ship to her desired Port in Safety. Amen. Dated in *London Dec. 9 - 1800*

*Certified unknown to Charles Mason*

The invoice and bill of lading for the Library of Congress, dated Dec. 9, 1800. A total of 152 works in 740 volumes were itemized at a cost of £475/4/0.



was later to become the first President of the Philadelphia Mercantile Library.) It was these twain who, on June 20, 1800, placed the order for the nuclear library with the London firm of book sellers, Messrs. Cadell and Davies.

Delighted as they were to receive so large a commission, it took these capable British agents a little while to fulfill it. "Several of the books . . . were only to be procured second-handed, and some of them, from their extreme scarcity, at very advanced prices." A few "articles" simply could not be supplied for the time being. But in their conscientious effort they selected the "best copies" obtainable and "charged the lowest prices possible." On December 11, 1800, they transmitted their "invoice and bill of lading." It itemized 152 works in 740 volumes at a cost of £475/4/0 from which they deducted the usual five percent because "Messrs. Baring & Co. paid us the amount of the bill, the instant it was presented to them." The books were packed in eleven hair trunks, "rather than boxes, which after their arrival would have been of little or no value." Cadell and Davies placed a value of £17/12/0 on the trunks. "Arrow-smith's two Maps of America, on Canvas and Rollers," "Priestly's Charts of Chronology and Biography on Canvas and Rollers" and "Faden's Map of South America" were shipped in a special case for which a charge of five shillings, six pence was made.

The invoice, which constitutes the first catalog of a vanished Library of Congress, is a profoundly moving document. It contains ancient and modern histories, biographies, chronologies, geographies, legal treatises, parliamentary practices, "Smith's *Wealth of Nations*," "Postlewayte's *Dictionary of Commerce*" and other economic studies, precedents, parliamentary debates, collections of treaties, and the classic writings on international law. The following are

described either as "scarce" or "very scarce:"

'Duncan's Caesar, fol. calf gilt . . . . .	[£] 3/6/0
"Russels Antient and Modern Europe, 7 vols. 8vo.	
"Adanson's Voyage to Senegal, 8vo. large paper . . . . .	2/16/0
"Grotius, by Barbeyrac, folio . . . . .	2/10/0
"Puffendorf, by do. folio . . . . .	4/4/0
"Jenkinson's Collection of Treaties, 3 vols. 8vo . . . . .	1/4/0
"Parliamentary Debates, 104 vols. calf, double lettered . . . . .	54/12/0
"Sinclair on the British Revenue, 4to. gilt . . . . .	4/0/0
"Bacon's Works, 5 vols., 4to. calf double lettered . . . . .	8/18/6
"Sidney's Works, 4to . . . . .	1/18/0"

The twelve "articles not yet obtained" are listed one by one. The last reads, "Collection of Maps of America," followed by a note, "There is no collection but what is included in the American Atlas."

### *God Send the Good Ship to Her Desired Port*

Two days before the agents transmitted their invoice and bill of lading the Library of Congress was afloat. Witness the following document:

Shipped by the Grace of God, in good Order and well-conditioned, by Cadell & Davies / in and upon the good ship called the American / where-of is Master, under God, for this present Voyage, Charles Venn / and now riding at Anchor in the River Thames and by God's Grace bound / for Baltimore to say, / Eleven Trunks and one Case / of Printed Books / being marked and numbered as in the Margin, and are to be delivered in the like good Order and well - / conditioned, at the aforesaid Port of Baltimore (the Act of God, the / King's Enemies, Fire, and all and every other Dangers and Accidents of the Seas, Rivers, and Navigation, / of whatever Nature and Kind soever, save Risk of Boats, so far as ships are liable thereto, excepted) unto / Robert Gilmor & Sons or to their Assigns, / Freight for the said Goods being paid / with Primage and Average accustomed. In Witness whereof the said Master of the said Ship hath / affirmed to four Bills of Lading, all of this Tenor and Date; the One of which four / Bills being accomplished,



the other three to stand void. And so God send the good ship to her / desired Port in Safety Amen. Dated in London Decr. 9 - 1800 / Contents unknown to Charles Venn.

When the "American" docked in Baltimore, Mr. Robert Gilmore, merchant, placed the Library of Congress in storage in the Custom House, where it remained from February 25, 1801, until April 1 of that year, when it was placed on board a packet and consigned to Samuel A. Otis, Secretary of the Senate, at the Port of Georgetown. By May 2, Mr. Otis was able to announce its arrival to President Jefferson: "The package[s] being perfectly dry, I shall omit opening them until further orders." They were placed in the office of the Clerk of the Senate, a room twenty-two by twenty-four feet and twenty-one feet high.

The Sixth Congress had adjourned on March 3, and the first session of the Seventh Congress was not to convene until December 7. Mr. Otis felt that "whenever they are opened some person should be made answerable for them or in my opinion the volumes will be immediately dispersed and lost." Nothing for the moment could be done, but Mr. Otis did not forget his responsibilities and on the first day of the new session the Senate adopted the following resolution: "That a committee be appointed to join such gentlemen as shall be appointed by the House of Representatives, to take into consideration a statement made this day by the Secretary of the Senate, respecting books and maps purchased in consequence of an act of Congress, passed 24th April, 1800, and to make a report of their opinion respecting the future arrangement of said books and maps; and that Messrs. [Uriah] Tracy and [Wilson Cary] Nicholas be the committee on the part of the Senate." The House immediately concurred, and assigned to the committee Joseph Hopper

Nicholson, Joseph Asheton Bayard, Sr., and John Randolph.

Mr. Randolph, who "would not have in his possession an American book, not even an American Bible," but who agreed that "a good library is a statesman's workshop," drew up a report which was considered by the Committee of the Whole on December 29. Debate centered on the extension of the borrowing privilege to the President, the Cabinet (including the Attorney General), the Supreme Court, and the diplomatic corps; the location of the library apartment; the method of appointing a Librarian and the appropriate salary for such an officer; the amount of money to be allowed for the increase of the collection, and the hours of opening. It passed the following day, but the Senate, which took a less liberal view, declined its concurrence. It took nearly a month to reconcile sharply conflicting concepts, but at last the differences were adjusted, and, on January 26, 1802, the first charter of governance was approved under the title, "An Act Concerning the Library for the Use of Both Houses of Congress." It contained six sections; the first provided that the books and maps, recently purchased, "together with the books or libraries which have heretofore been kept separately by each house," should be "placed in the Capitol, in the room which was occupied by the House of Representatives, during the last session of the sixth Congress." This referred to a room on the principal story, located on the west side of the north wing. Measuring eighty-six by thirty-five feet, thirty-six feet high, it was lighted by two ranges of windows and was furnished with galleries. The second section of the act empowered the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives "to establish such regulations and restrictions in relation to the said library, as to them shall seem proper, and from time to time, to alter or amend

the same." The third, directed that the Librarian should be "appointed by the President of the United States solely;" and that "previous to his entering upon the duties of his office" the Librarian should give bond, "payable to the United States, in such a sum, and with such security as the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House" might "deem sufficient, for the safekeeping of such books, maps and furniture" as might "be confided to his care, and the faithful discharge of his trust." The fourth section limited the borrowing privilege, declaring "that no map shall be permitted to be taken out of the said library by any person; nor any book, except by the President and Vice President of the United States, and members of the Senate and House of Representatives." The fifth fixed the compensation of the Librarian: "a sum not exceeding two dollars per diem, for every day of necessary attendance; the amount whereof, together with the necessary expenses incident to the said library, after being ascertained by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives . . . shall be paid out of the fund annually appropriated for the contingent expenses of both Houses of Congress." The sixth and concluding section directed that moneys appropriated for the increase of the collection "shall be laid out under the direction of a joint committee, to consist of three members of the Senate, and three members of the House of Representatives."

Three days after signing the law, President Jefferson appointed his old friend John James Beckley, Librarian of Congress. At various times, Mr. Beckley had served as Clerk of the House of Delegates and of the Senate of Virginia. Upon the organization of the National House of Representatives, he had been elected Clerk, a post which he had occupied from April 1, 1789, until May 15, 1797. On Decem-

ber 7, 1801, he had resumed that office and was to retain it (and the librarianship) until his death in 1807. Hugh Blair Gribbsby in his *History of the Virginia Federal Convention of 1788*, surmises that he may have been born in England, and declares, on the authority of Governor Tazewell, that he was educated at Eton where he was a classmate of Charles James Fox. In 1776, he was admitted to the Phi Beta Kappa Society of William and Mary College.

Now he was called upon to double in brass, and, for the adequate performance of his new rôle he appears to have depended, at least in part, upon the assistance of Josias Wilson King, who was Engrossing Clerk of the House. A memorial from King presented to the House by Joseph Hopper Nicholson, Representative from Maryland, and a member of the Joint Committee on the Library, February 18, 1806, sets forth the facts as follows:

That at the first session of the Seventh Congress, immediately after the passage of the act concerning the Library for the use of both Houses of Congress, your memorialist was appointed assistant librarian to label, arrange, and take charge of the books of the said Library; that the memorialist accordingly performed the said duty, and also executed the trust reposed in him as a clerk in the office of the Clerk to the House at the same time. That the present Clerk of your honorable body, who was appointed Librarian by the President of the United States, agreed to divide equally the compensation with your memorialist allowed by the same act, during the time he continued to serve in the Library, but the memorialist has not hitherto received the said compensation, as he had a right to expect, although repeated applications have in vain been made therefor, from the year 1802 to the present time.

Poor King! He never got his money. The Committee of Accounts reported unfavorably on his memorial and he was forced to content himself with the salary of \$1,000 which was authorized, for his formal duties.

But the collection was organized, and by



April, the first catalog, arranged by format had been prepared. The Library was appraised at a little more than four thousand dollars.

*Take Care, Hold the Wagon Back!*

At the head of the Joint Committee was Abraham Baldwin, Senator from Georgia. A native of Connecticut, graduate of Yale, where on one occasion he had "preached all day in the Chapel," a chaplain in the Revolutionary Army, lawyer, author of the charter of the University of Georgia and for many years its president, Member of the Continental Congress, Delegate to the Federal Convention, lately a Member of the House of Representatives, he was considered "less distinguished by the brilliancy of his talents, or acuteness of reasoning, than by his strength of mind and soundness of judgment; slow and deliberate in making up his conclusions, he examined thoroughly every subject on which he acted, but when he became satisfied as to the correct course, no one followed it in a more undeviating line." In discussing public affairs, he once admonished old friends "Take care, hold the wagon back; there is more danger of its running too fast than of its going too slow." It is not unlikely that he applied this admirably conservative philosophy to the straggling ill-defined library which had been confided to his charge. First he laid down certain principles and then, with consummate and characteristic wisdom, sought the counsel of the outstanding bookman in the community. Mr. Jefferson's letter of April 14, 1802, was more a reflection of, and response to, Senator Baldwin's "ideas" than a presentation of his own. It was, in other words, a clue to the congressional concept of its Library at the turn of the nineteenth century.

It is opened with an announcement: "I have prepared a [desiderata] catalogue for the Library of Congress in conformity

with your ideas that books of entertainment are not within the scope of it, and that books in other languages, where there are not translations of them, are not to be admitted freely." It continues: "I have confined the catalogue to those branches of science which belong to the deliberations of the members as statesmen, and in these have omitted those classical books, ancient and modern, which gentlemen generally have in their private libraries, but which can not properly claim a place in a collection made merely for the purpose of reference." With respect to historical literature, he had restricted his selection "to the chronological works which give facts and dates with a minuteness not to be found in narratives composed for agreeable reading." Under the subject of the law of nature and nations, he had "put down everything" he knew of "worth possessing," because this is a branch of science often under the discussion of Congress, and the books written in it not to be found in private libraries." In the case of law, he had recommended "only general treatises for the purpose of reference, for the reason that "the discussions under this head in Congress are really so minute as to require and admit that reports and treatises should be introduced." He imagined that "the parliamentary section should be complete," because "it is only by having a law of proceedings and by every member having the means of understanding it himself and appealing to it [here spoke the author of the *manual*], that he can be protected against caprice and despotism in the chair." He had included "the two great encyclopedias" because, in his opinion, they formed "a compleat supplement for the sciences omitted in the present collection." Finally, he had "added a set of dictionaries in the different languages which may be often wanting." This list, combined with others which



might be prepared, would enable the Joint Committee to devise a "general plan and to select from it every year, to the amount of the annual fund, of those most wanting."

The specifications were precise. The Library of Congress was to be a vertical library composed of books so organized as to be consulted standing up, rather than read at reclining leisure. It was to exclude "polite" literature, indeed, all literature likely to be found in the personal collections of the gentlemen in the Capitol. History and law were to be subjected to conditions. An exception was to be made for histories of America. The all-but-indecipherable letter-press copy of the want-list contains this note:

The travels, histories [and] accounts of America previous to the Revolution should be obtained. It is already become all but impossible to make a collection of these things. Standing orders should be lodged with our ministers in Spain, France and England and our Consul at Amsterdam to procure everything within that description which can be hunted up in those countries.

Moreover, there was, perhaps, to be a little philosophy, but no theology, no technology, no bibliography, no pedagogy, no music, no record of the fine or graphic arts. It was, to the extent possible, to be reserved for English texts. It was to grow slowly, controlled by a rigid plan. It was to be more useful to debate, than fundamental to the preparation of legislation. It was, in other words, to be very practical and very dull.

The "catalogue" was dispatched to George William Erving, a graduate of Oriel College, Oxford, whom Mr. Jefferson had appointed Consul and Agent of the United States at London. With the assistance of one Jonathan Burrall, Mr. Erving succeeded in securing some of his patron's recommendations to the amount of £220/11/9 sterling.

Another large foreign order was placed

with Robert R. Livingston, then our Minister to France. The "Chancellor's" purchases amounted to 2,446 French livres.

### *A Becoming Display of Erudition . . . A Brighter Lustre to Truth*

Indeed, as late as January 10, 1806, all of the Library's funds for books had been expended abroad. In that year Senator Samuel Latham Mitchill, "Nestor of American Science," lately professor of natural history, chemistry, agriculture and botany at Columbia College, and staunch supporter of the library movement, was chairman of the Joint Committee. On January 20 he submitted a report in which he urged the importance of expanding the size and nature of the collections. It contained these sentences:

. . . Every member knows that the inquiries of standing and select committees, cannot here be aided by large public libraries, as in New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. Nor has it hitherto appeared that so much benefit is to be derived from private collections at the present seat of government, as in those large cities. Every week of the session, causes additional regret that the volumes of literature and science, within the reach of the national legislature, are not more rich and ample. The want of geographical illustrations, is truly distressing. And the deficiencies of historical and political works, is scarcely less severely felt. There is however, no danger of realising the story of a *parliamentum indoctum* in this country, especially if steps be seasonably taken to furnish the library with such materials as will enable statesmen to be correct in their investigations, and by a becoming display of erudition and research, give a higher dignity and a brighter lustre to truth.

The first requisite was an appropriation. This was secured by an act of February 21, 1806, which provided "one thousand dollars yearly, for the term of five years," and revived and continued the authorization to apply to purchases "the unexpended balance of the former appropriation." On March 31, the Joint Committee notified Joseph Nourse, the financial agent for the

Library, that of their membership, Samuel L. Mitchill, John Quincy Adams and Joseph Clay had been authorized to draw on him "for any sum not exceeding four hundred and ninety four dollars to be accounted for to the said Agent, at the ensuing session of Congress." It was understood "that books should be purchased in New York, Philadelphia and Boston," during the recess. This was significant as a change of policy; for the first time the American book trade was to be the recipient of congressional favor. The arrangement seems to have engaged the serious attention of the three men. Congressman Clay purchased from William Duane, of Philadelphia, and Daniel Rapine, of Washington nearly three hundred dollars worth of books. Dr. Mitchill expended about four hundred dollars with T. & J. Swords, J. Trebont, Alexander Steward & Co., and J. Riley & Co. So well did the Massachusetts Senator conduct his business with William Wells, A. S. Webber and Josiah Quincy, that at the end of the calendar year there remained "in the hands of John Q. Adams" only five dollars and forty-three cents. Dr. Mitchill reported to the Senate: "the articles bought in pursuance of this authority, have been placed in the library, except one box of books which has been unfortunately lost on its passage from Boston to Washington, by the foundering at sea, of the vessel on board of which it had been shipped." Dr. Mitchill concluded his report by requesting "the members of the two Houses . . . to furnish lists of good and proper books, and to suggest hints for the improvement of the library." This invitation has been renewed by successive committees and librarians at periodic intervals for more than a century.

Thus, modestly, almost imperceptibly, the Library of Congress was formed. For accretions it depended largely upon the annual appropriation. There were, to be

sure some donations. The *Annual Report of the Library Committee of the Two Houses of Congress*, submitted April 11, 1808, enumerated seventeen gifts from individuals, legislatures and societies, of which the following entries have for the twentieth century, a wistful and particular association interest:

Acts passed at the 1st session of the 13th, and 1st session of the 14th general assembly of the state of Kentucky. Gift of Mr. H. Clay, senator from Kentucky.

Michigan. This book contains the laws, &c. of the Michigan territory, and some of the writings of A. B. Woodward, on the government of the district of Columbia, &c. Gift of Mr. A. B. Woodward, presiding judge of the Michigan territory.

Examination of the conduct of G. Britain respecting neutrals. Gift of Mr. Tench Coxe.

Carte générale du territoire d'Orléans, comprenant aussi la Floride occidentale et une portion du territoire du Mississippi, par B. Lafon. Gift of Mr. Lafon.

Particulars of the capture of the American ship Olive Branch, vol. 2d, by Ira Allen, of Vermont. Gift of the Author.

The evidence of the trial of Aaron Burr, for treason, at Richmond, in Virginia, 1807, as laid before Congress by the President of the United States [Thomas Jefferson], in a message. Presented by the same.

The following year, the "list of donations" included:

Two copies of the Leyden Gazette for the year 1807. Presented by James Madison, secretary of state.

History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution. Interspersed with Biographical, Political and Moral observations—in three volumes. By Mrs. Mercy Warren of Plymouth, Mass. Presented by the Author.

De la Pratique de L'Agriculture; ou Recueil d'Essais et d'Experiences dont la succes est constaté par des pièces authentiques, &c. &c. &c. Presented by the President of the United States in behalf of the author, Nicholas Douette-Richardot, of Langres in France.

A pamphlet entitled, "Rapport fait a la Société d'Agriculture du Département de la Haute-Marne," &c., &c. Presented by the same.

A folio manuscript work in French, under the title of "Constitution de la République Benini-



enne. Par M. Louis Henri Rouelle," of Paris. This book is dedicated to the President and Congress of the United States. Presented by the same.

During these "early years of the Library," wrote Ainsworth Rand Spofford in 1876, "there was little occasion for official work with a view to its wider usefulness; and the care of the few books accumulated (which amounted only to 3,000 volumes up to the year 1814) involved but little time or trouble." When John Beckley died in 1807, Patrick Magruder was appointed to the combined post of Clerk of the House of Representatives and Librarian of Congress.

As work on the construction of the Capitol progressed the Library was shunted to a small committee room, first in favor of the House of Representatives, then the Supreme Court, and then the Senate. In this mean apartment the timbers of the roof and floor were decaying, and as the collections grew in size it became necessary to pile books in disordered heaps. Suitable accommodations were an object of concern and the situation was about to be remedied when the outbreak of the second British war put an end to public works.

The Library's participation in the War of 1812 was both negative and notorious. In the spring of 1813, American forces had captured York (now Toronto), then the capital of Upper Canada, had burned the Parliament Buildings with the library and archives, and had carried off the plate from the church. On August 24, 1814, Washington was captured by the British, and the Capitol of the United States was consumed by fire. The books of Congress were used as kindling. The Library was an ash heap.

The first phase of the Library's history had ended. Influences had combined which had led to its foundation. The collection had been formed in accordance with a narrow notion of the nature of useful books. As for its privileges, they had, in

the beginning, been limited to Members of the Congress; the single exception being the President of the United States. Then they had been extended by statute to include the financial agent of the Library, and by Joint Resolution, the Justices of the Supreme Court. But its scope and its constituency alike were limited. There was little reason to fear that the wagon would run too fast. Beyond the Capitol, ruts were deep and its wheels tiny. It was not constructed for the hard wear of the national road. Perhaps the British torch had destroyed it altogether.

### *Second Blooming*

The Library's second period covered the period from the close of the War of 1812 to the end of the War Between the States. It was a time of subtleties and implications; actions taken were less significant in themselves than they were significant as impulses toward a changing purpose and an enlarging responsibility. These were commitments of the future.

Prior to the late summer of 1814, the Library of Congress had attained an unconscious but remarkably successful anonymity. Aside from members in and out of Congress, a handful of officers of government, and a few authors eager to place their works in the center of the national enterprise, the people of the United States were generally unaware of its existence. The bonfire did more than encinder it; it brought it for the first time to public and strangely affectionate notice. Indignation at destruction so wanton and so uncivilized was widespread. Unknowingly, or unmindful of, the precedent of York, the British soldiers were compared unfavorably with the Mohammedans who had destroyed the Alexandrian library. They were vandals, barbarians, goths and all the other names which always are applied to the enemies of culture. Most outraged of all were, quite properly, the Senators



and Representatives who were called into extraordinary session on the nineteenth of September. On the twenty-second, Congressman Richard Mentor Johnson, of Kentucky, had just submitted a resolution calling for a committee of inquiry into "the causes of the capture of this city by the enemy; also into the manner in which the public buildings and property were destroyed," when the Speaker laid before the House "a letter from Patrick Magruder, Clerk to this House, detailing the circumstances attending the destruction of his office by the enemy." This communication was referred to a committee for investigation and report. Magruder, a native of Montgomery County, had attended Princeton College for a short time, had studied law, been admitted to the bar, practiced his profession, and served in the Ninth Congress as a Representative from Maryland, where he had served up to his assumption of the clerk-librarianship.

At the time of the British incursion he had been absent from the city, recovering from an illness at a Virginia spa. He had left the Clerk's Office and the Library in the hands of assistants; nevertheless he was made the scapegoat by the investigating committee which, in its subsequent report found that "no preparatory measures" had been "taken to secure the library and papers appertaining to the office of the House of Representatives."

The report went on to point out that:

. . . As to the absence of the clerk on account of *indisposition*, as alleged, the committee have not examined as to the particular nature and extent of that indisposition. They will only say that it was, or ought to have been, serious and alarming to have justified his absence under the circumstances which then existed. The committee are, therefore, constrained to express the opinion that due precaution and diligence were not exercised to prevent the destruction and loss which has [sic] been sustained.

As a consequence he was threatened

with removal, and on January 28, 1815, he resigned his office, in order "to permit those by whom I am persecuted to attain, with greater ease, an object to which they have been willing to sacrifice not only my family but my reputation." It was accepted two days later.

Meanwhile, as early as September 26, 1814, Senator Robert Henry Goldsborough, of Maryland, had introduced a resolution calling for the appointment of a Joint Committee "to have the direction of the money appropriated to the purchase of books and maps for the use of the two Houses of Congress;" it was passed instantly, and before the day was over the House had given its concurrence. These swift actions had proclaimed the intent of Congress to make the replacement of its library a matter of prompt and proper attention.

### *The Substratum of a Great National Library*

Mr. Jefferson, then living in retirement at Monticello, and inconvenienced by financial stringency and a desire to rid himself of the embarrassment of debt, had made a proposal. On September 21 he had written to his old friend Samuel Harrison Smith, founder of the *National Intelligencer*, at that time Commissioner of Revenue, a long letter, in the course of which he had remarked his presumption that it would "be among the early objects of Congress to recommence their collection." He considered that this would "be difficult while the war continues, and intercourse with Europe is attended with so much risk." On the other hand there was his library. He had "been fifty years making it," and had "spared no pains, opportunity or expense to make it what it is." While Minister to France, he had spent every afternoon, when not engaged, "for a summer or two in examining all the bookstores, turning over every book" with

his own hand, "and putting by everything which related to America, and indeed whatever was rare and valuable in every science." In addition, he had had "standing orders during the whole time" he "was in Europe, on its principal book-marts, particularly Amsterdam, Frankfort, Madrid and London, for such works relating to America as could not be found in Paris," with the result that "in that department particularly such a collection was made as probably can never again be effected, because it is hardly probable that the same opportunities, the same time, industry, perseverance and expense, with the same knowledge of the bibliography of the subject would again happen to be in concurrence." He continued: "During the same period, and after my return to America, I was led to procure, also, whatever related to the duties of those in the high concerns of the nation." He ventured to estimate the size of the collection, supposing it to contain "between nine and ten thousand volumes." It included, so he declared, all that "is chiefly valuable in science and literature generally," although it extended "more particularly to whatever belongs to the American statesman." It was, "in the diplomatic and parliamentary branches . . . particularly full." He had long been sensible that "it ought not to continue private property" and had provided that at his death "Congress should have the first refusal of it at their own price." The loss that Congress had now incurred, made "the present the proper moment for their accommodation, without regard to the small remnant of time" remaining to him and the "barren use" he might make of it. He, therefore, asked of Mr. Smith's friendship, "the tender of it to the Library Committee of Congress, not knowing" himself "of whom the committee" consisted. He enclosed a catalogue, which would enable those gentlemen "to judge

of its contents." As for the volumes, "nearly the whole" were "well bound, abundance of them elegantly," and represented "the choicest editions existing." Their value might be determined by appraisers selected by the Committee, and payment for them "made convenient to the public." He would be willing to accept "such annual installments as the law of Congress . . . left at their disposal, or in stock of any of their late loans or of any loan they" might "institute" at the current session, "so as to spare the present calls of our country and await its days of peace and prosperity." Nevertheless the Congress might "enter . . . into immediate use of it, as eighteen or twenty wagons would place it in Washington in a single trip of a fortnight."

He would "be willing, indeed, to retain a few of the books, to amuse the time" he had "yet to pass, which might be valued with the rest, but not included in the sum of valuation until they should be restored at" his "death." On that score he would take pains to avoid mischance, "so that the whole library," as it stood in the catalogue would "be theirs without any garbling." Those books which he would like to retain "would be chiefly classical and mathematical." He would like also to have the use of "one of the five encyclopedias." But he would not press the point.

Then came the famous line: "I do not know that it contains any branch of science which Congress would wish to exclude from their collection; there is, in fact, no subject to which a Member of Congress may not have occasion to refer." This is followed by the statement of his unwillingness to have the collection dismembered—"My desire is either to place it in their hands entire, or to preserve it so here." He was "engaged in making an alphabetical index of the authors' names, to be annexed to the catalogue," which



he would forward as soon as it was completed. The letter concluded: "Any agreement you shall be so good as to take the trouble of entering into with the committee, I hereby confirm."

Sometime between October 2 and October 7, Mr. Smith submitted the offer and the catalog to the members of the Joint Committee. Writing to Mr. Jefferson on the latter date, he reported that "the tender was respectfully received . . . with the assurance that no time should be lost in acting upon it." On the ninth, Senator Goldsborough introduced a resolution "That the joint library committee of the two houses of Congress be, and they are hereby, authorized and empowered to contract, on their part, for the purchase of the library of Mr. Jefferson, late President of the United States, for the use of both Houses of Congress." The following day it passed the Senate, without opposition, and was sent to the House, where it was read twice "and referred to a Committee of the Whole Tomorrow."

However, it did not come up until Monday, October 17, when the debate, according to the annalist, was "desultory." Those who opposed the purchase were Thomas Jackson Oakley, of New York, a Federalist, Yale graduate, former surrogate of Dutchess County, an outspoken critic of the Madison administration and the conduct of the War, a man of "majestic bearing," a facile speaker who resorted to "but little rhetoric or gesticulation;" John Reed, of Massachusetts, a Federalist, graduate of Brown, former schoolmaster; and Thomas Peabody Grosvenor, of New York, a Federalist, Yale graduate, lately district attorney of Essex County. Their objections were generally the "extent" of the collection, "the cost of the purchase, the nature of the selection, embracing too many works in foreign languages, some of too philosophical a character, and some otherwise objectionable." As an example

of those in the first category, mention was made of the works of M. Voltaire; typical of the other was Callender's *Prospect Before Us*.

The outspoken advocates of purchase were Robert Wright, of Maryland, a Democrat, educated at Washington College, successively private, lieutenant and captain in the Continental Army, formerly a senator and governor of his State, always a loyal supporter of Mr. Jefferson; Adam Seybert, of Pennsylvania, a Democrat, graduate of the medical department of the University of Pennsylvania who had continued his studies at Edinburgh, Göttingen, and Paris, member of the American Philosophical Society, chemist, mineralogist, apothecary, and statistician of government revenues and expenditures; Thomas Bolling Robertson, of Louisiana, a Democrat, educated at the College of William and Mary, lately secretary of the Territory of Louisiana by appointment of Mr. Jefferson, first Representative of his State in Congress, a man "capable of using strong denunciatory language" whose comparatively short life was to be crowded "with public activity and office-holding, to which he applied himself with energy and conviction;" Joseph H. Hawkins, of Kentucky, a Federalist, lawyer, former speaker of the State House of Representatives; and John Forsyth, of Georgia, a Democrat, graduate of Princeton, former attorney general of his State.

These gentlemen, according to the official record, "contended that so valuable a library, one so admirably calculated for the substratum of a great national library, was not to be obtained in the United States; and that, although there might be some works to which gentlemen might take exception, there were others of very opposite character; that this, besides, was no reason against the purchase, because in every library of value might be found some books to which exceptions might be taken,

according to the feelings or prejudices of those who examined them."

The House adjourned without taking action. Discussion was resumed on the following day. An amendment to set a ceiling price of twenty-five thousand dollars was offered, "the debate before its conclusion became rather too animated, and being checked by the Speaker, the question was permitted to be taken" with the result that it was voted down 103 to 37.

At that point the venerable Timothy Pickering of Massachusetts, a Federalist, graduate of Harvard, one-time Revolutionary colonel and quartermaster general, President Washington's Postmaster General, Secretary of War, and Secretary of State, proposed an amendment "the object of which was a selection of part of the library." Mr. Jefferson had gone on record as declining to entertain the suggestion of partition and the Pickering amendment was negatived by a vote of 92 to 56.

Finally Representative Oakley offered an amendment "requiring the sanction of Congress to the agreement for the purchase of the library, before it should become binding." It was adopted and in this form the resolution was ordered to a third reading. It passed the House on October 19, the Senate concurred on the twentieth, and final approval was given on the twenty-first.

The Joint Committee proceeded to secure an appraisal and on November 28, Senator Goldsborough reported a bill to authorize the purchase of the library, said to contain 6,487 volumes, for \$23,950, "in Treasury notes of the issue ordered by the law of the fourth of March, one thousand eight hundred and fourteen." It passed the Senate without debate or amendment on December 3.

The discussion in the House took place on January 26, 1815; and the two members of the Joint Committee on the

Library who were present were strangely silent.

Joseph Lewis, Jr., a Federalist Representative from Virginia, made a motion for indefinite postponement. It was lost by the narrow margin of 68 votes against 74.

Cyrus King, of Massachusetts, a Federalist, educated at Phillips Academy, Andover, and Columbia College, "moved to recommit the bill with instructions to a select committee to report a new section authorizing the selection of such of the books belonging to said library as might be necessary or useful to Congress in their deliberations, and to dispose of the remainder at public sale." This was "negatived."

Thereupon Mr. King, half-brother of another distinguished bibliophile, Rufus King, "moved to recommit the bill to a select committee [of the three members of the House on the Joint Committee on the Library only one was a Federalist], with instructions to report a new section authorizing the Library Committee, as soon as said library shall be received at Washington, to select therefrom all books of an atheistical, irreligious, and immoral tendency, if any such there be, and send the same back to Mr. Jefferson without any expense to him"; but "this motion Mr. K. thought proper afterward to withdraw."

It was reported by the patronizing annalist that the "subject, and the various motions relative thereto, gave rise to a debate which lasted till the hour of adjournment; which, though it afforded much amusement to the auditors, would not interest the feelings or judgment of any reader."

Opposing the bill, in addition to Cyrus King, Thomas Peabody Grosvenor, and Timothy Pickering were Samuel Farrow, a "War Democrat" from South Carolina, whose face bore a scar from a saber wound sustained in the Revolution; Newton Can-



non, of Tennessee, a Democrat, lately a Colonel in the Rifles with service in the War of 1812; Alexander Contee Hanson, of Maryland, a Federalist, graduate of St. John's College, journalist and administration critic; and a New Hampshire Federalist, product of Phillips Exeter Academy and Dartmouth College, then serving his first term in Congress, the Honorable Daniel Webster.

They "opposed the bill . . . on account of the scarcity of money, and the necessity of appropriating it to purposes more indispensable than the purchase of a library; the probable insecurity of such a library placed here [there was talk of changing the seat of government]; the high price to be given for this collection; its miscellaneous and almost exclusive literary (instead of legal and historical) character, &c."

The advocates of purchase were Robert Wright, of Maryland, a Revolutionary veteran, James Fisk, of Vermont, a Democrat, Revolutionary veteran, minister of the Universalist denomination and lawyer; John Rhea, of Tennessee, a Democrat, native of Ireland, graduate of Princeton, member of the Patriot Force at the Battle of King's Mountain; and John Whitefield Hulbert, of Massachusetts, a Federalist, lawyer and bank director.

"Enforced with zeal and vehemence," these champions of the bill replied to its

detractors "with fact, wit, and argument, to show that the purchase, to be made on terms of long credit, could not affect the present resources of the United States; that the price was moderate, the library more valuable from the scarcity of many of its books, and altogether a most admirable substratum for a National Library."

However compelling or unconvincing their arguments may have been, it is a fact of history that the bill was passed by a narrow margin of ten votes, and that on January 30, 1815, it became a law.

The action was momentous for four reasons: (1) the Library of Congress was reestablished, (2) the most distinguished private collection in the United States (it more than doubled the size of the old Library) passed into the possession of the Government, (3) the character of the Library of Congress changed from a "special" library to a "general" library (Mr. Jefferson had said "there is . . . no subject to which a member of Congress may not have occasion to refer"); and (4) Congress consciously secured "a most admirable substratum for a National Library."

How had this been accomplished? Who were those who supported so radical a revision of principle and purpose? Who were they who looked with disfavor upon it? An analysis of the House votes may offer a clue.

## AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE OF THE LIBRARY OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

[Approved January 30, 1815]

## A Record of the Vote in the House of Representatives

## AFFIRMATIVE

Name	State	Town	Born	Died	Party <sup>1</sup>
John Alexander	Ohio	Xenia	1777	1848	D
Willis Alston	North Carolina	Greenville	1769	1837	D
William Anderson	Pennsylvania	Chester	1762	1829	D
Philip Pendleton Barbour	Virginia	Orange	1783	1841	D
Thomas Bines	New Jersey	Pennsville		1826	D
John Henry Bowen	Tennessee	Gallatin	1780	1822	D
Robert Brown	Pennsylvania	Weaversville	1744	1823	D
Ezra Butler	Vermont	Waterbury	1763	1838	D
John Caldwell Calhoun	South Carolina	Wilmington	1782	1850	D
John Joel Chappell	do.	Columbia	1782	1871	D
John Conard	Pennsylvania	Germantown	1773	1857	D
William Crawford	do.	Gettysburg	1760	1823	D
William Creighton, Jr.	Ohio	Chillicothe	1778	1851	D
Edward Crouch	Pennsylvania	Paxtang	1764	1827	D
Alfred Cuthbert	Georgia	Eaton	1785	1856	D
Joseph Desha	Kentucky	Mays Lick	1768	1842	D
William Pope Duval	do.	Bardstown	1784	1854	D
Elias Earle	South Carolina	Centerville	1762	1823	D
David Reid Evans	do.	Winnsboro	1769	1843	D
William Findley	Pennsylvania	Youngstown	1741	1821	D
James Fisk	Vermont	Barre	1763	1844	D
Jonathan Fisk	New York	Newburgh	1778	1832	D
Peter Forney	North Carolina	Lincolntown	1756	1834	D
John Forsyth	Georgia	Augusta	1780	1841	D
Meshack Franklin	North Carolina		1772	1839	D
Thomas Gholson, Jr.	Virginia	Brunswick		1816	D
Peterson Goodwyn	do.	Petersburg	1745	1818	D
Theodore Gourdin	South Carolina	Pineville	1764	1826	D
Isaac Griffin	Pennsylvania	New Geneva	1756	1827	D
Bolling Hall	Georgia	Milledgeville	1767	1836	D
Thomas K. Harris	Tennessee	Sparta		1816	D
Abraham Joseph Hasbrouck	New York	Kingston	1773	1845	D
Aylett Hawes	Virginia	Woodville	1768	1833	D
Joseph H. Hawkins	Kentucky	Lexington		1823	F
Samuel Hopkins	do.	Henderson	1753	1819	D
Levi Hubbard	Massachusetts	Paris	1762	1836	D
John Whitefield Hulbert	do.	Pittsfield	1770	1831	F
Charles Jared Ingersoll	Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	1782	1862	D
Samuel Delucenna Ingham	do.	New Hope	1779	1860	D
William Irving	New York	New York	1766	1821	D
John George Jackson	Virginia	Clarksburg	1777	1825	D
Richard Mentor Johnson	Kentucky	Great Crossings	1781	1850	D
William Kennedy	North Carolina	Washington	1768	1834	F
Joseph Kent	Maryland	Bladensburg	1779	1837	F
John Kerr	Virginia	Mountpleasant	1782	1842	D
John Kershaw	South Carolina	Camden	1765	1829	D
James Kilbourne	Ohio	Worthington	1770	1850	D
John Lefferts	New York	Brooklyn	1785	1829	D
William Lowndes	South Carolina	Jacksonboro	1782	1822	D
Aaron Lyle	Pennsylvania	West Middletown	1759	1825	D
William McCoy	Virginia	Franklin		1864	D
Alexander McKim	Maryland	Baltimore	1748	1832	D
John McLean	Ohio	Lebanon	1785	1861	D
William Hardy Murfree	North Carolina	Murfreesburg	1781	1827	D
Hugh Nelson	Virginia	Milton	1768	1836	D
Thomas Newton, Jr.	do.	Norfolk	1768	1847	D

See footnote at end of table.



## A Record of the Vote in the House of Representatives—Continued

## AFFIRMATIVE—continued

Name	State	Town	Born	Died	Party <sup>1</sup>
Stephen Ormsby.....	Kentucky.....	Louisville.....	1759	1844	D
Israel Pickens.....	North Carolina....	Morgantown.....	1780	1827	D
William Piper.....	Pennsylvania;.....	Bloodyrun.....	1774	1852	(No party)
James Pleasants.....	Virginia.....	Goochland.....	1769	1836	D
John Rea.....	Pennsylvania.....	Chambersburg....	1755	1829	D
John Rhea.....	Tennessee.....	Sullivan.....	1753	1832	D
Charles Rich.....	Vermont.....	Shoreham.....	1771	1824	D
Samuel Ringgold.....	Maryland.....	Hagerstown.....	1770	1829	D
John Roane.....	Virginia.....	Uppowac.....	1766	1838	D
Thomas Bolling Robertson.....	Louisiana.....	New Orleans.....	1779	1828	D
Ebenezer Sage.....	New York.....	Sag Harbor.....	1755	1834	D
John Seirer.....	Tennessee.....	Knoxville.....	1745	1815	D
Adam Seybert.....	Pennsylvania.....	Philadelphia.....	1773	1825	D
Solomon P. Sharp.....	Kentucky.....	Russelville.....	1780	1825	D
Isaac Smith.....	Pennsylvania.....	Jersey Shore.....	1761	1834	D
John Smith.....	Virginia.....	.....	....	1836	(No party)
John W. Taylor.....	New York.....	Ballston Spa.....	1784	1854	D
Thomas Telfair.....	Georgia.....	Savannah.....	1780	1818	D
George Michael Troup.....	do.....	Dublin.....	1780	1856	D
Daniel Udree.....	Pennsylvania.....	Reading.....	1751	1828	D
Thomas Ward.....	New Jersey.....	Newark.....	1759	1842	D
Isaac Williams, Jr.....	New York.....	Cooperstown.....	1777	1860	D
Thomas Wilson.....	Pennsylvania.....	Eric.....	1772	1824	D
Robert Wright.....	Maryland.....	Queenstown.....	1752	1826	D
Bartlett Yancey.....	North Carolina....	Caswell.....	1785	1828	(No party)

## NEGATIVE

Stevenson Archer.....	Maryland.....	Bel Air.....	1786	1848	D
Daniel Avery.....	New York.....	Aurora.....	1766	1842	D
William Baylies.....	Massachusetts.....	Bridgewater.....	1776	1865	D
Thomas Monteagle Bayly.....	Virginia.....	Drummondtown...	1775	1834	D
Abijah Bigelow.....	Massachusetts.....	Lcominster.....	1775	1860	F
Alexander Boyd.....	New York.....	Middleburg.....	1764	1854	F
George Bradbury.....	Massachusetts.....	Portland.....	1770	1823	F
James Breckenridge.....	Virginia.....	Fincastle.....	1763	1833	F
Elijah Brigham.....	Massachusetts.....	Westboro.....	1751	1816	F
James Caldwell.....	Ohio.....	St. Clairsville...	1770	1838	D
Newton Cannon.....	Tennessee.....	Harpeth.....	1781	1841	D
Epaphroditus Champion.....	Connecticut.....	East Haddam.....	1756	1834	F
Bradbury Cilley.....	New Hampshire.....	Nottingham.....	1760	1831	F
David Clendenin.....	Ohio.....	Youngstown.....	....	....	(No party)
Oliver Cromwell Comstock....	New York.....	Trumansburg.....	1780	1860	D
Thomas Cooper.....	Delaware.....	Georgetown.....	1764	1829	F
William Cox, Jr.....	New Jersey.....	Burlington.....	1762	1831	F
John Culpepper.....	North Carolina....	Allenton.....	1761	1841	F
John Davenport.....	Connecticut.....	Stamford.....	1752	1830	F
Roger Davis.....	Pennsylvania.....	Charlestown.....	1762	1815	D
Samuel Davis.....	Massachusetts.....	Bath.....	1774	1831	F
William Ely.....	do.....	Springfield.....	1765	1817	F
Samuel Farrow.....	South Carolina....	Spartansburg.....	1759	1824	D
James Geddes.....	New York.....	Onondaga.....	1763	1838	F
Charles Goldsborough.....	Maryland.....	Cambridge.....	1765	1834	F
Thomas Peabody Grosvenor....	New York.....	Hudson.....	1778	1817	F

See footnote at end of table.

## A Record of the Vote in the House of Representatives—Continued

NEGATIVE—continued

Name	State	Town	Born	Died	Party <sup>1</sup>
William Hale.....	New Hampshire...	Dover.....	1765	1848	F
Alexander Contee Hanson.....	Maryland.....	Rockville.....	1786	1819	F
Samuel Henderson.....	Pennsylvania.....	Norristown.....	1764	1841	R
Nathaniel Woodhull Howell.....	New York.....	Canandaigua.....	1770	1851	(No party)
John Pratt Hungerford.....	Virginia.....	Leedstown.....	1761	1833	D
Richard Jackson, Jr.....	Rhode Island.....	Providence.....	1764	1838	F
Moss Kent.....	New York.....	Leraysville.....	1766	1838	F
Cyrus King.....	Massachusetts.....	Saco.....	1772	1817	F
Lyman Law.....	Connecticut.....	New London.....	1770	1842	F
Joseph Lewis, Jr.....	Virginia.....	Upperville.....	1772	1834	F
John Lovett.....	New York.....	Albany.....	1761	1818	F
Nathaniel Macon.....	North Carolina.....	Warrenton.....	1757	1837	D
Jacob Markell.....	New York.....	Manheim.....	1770	1852	F
Thomas Montgomery.....	Kentucky.....	Stanford.....	1779	1828	D
Jonathan Ogden Moseley.....	Connecticut.....	East Haddam.....	1762	1838	F
Thomas Jackson Oakley.....	New York.....	Poughkeepsie.....	1783	1857	F
Joseph Pearson.....	North Carolina.....	Salisbury.....	1776	1834	F
Timothy Pickering.....	Massachusetts.....	Wendham.....	1745	1829	F
Timothy Pitkin.....	Connecticut.....	Farmington.....	1766	1847	F
Elisha Reynolds Potter.....	Rhode Island.....	Kingston.....	1764	1835	F
John Reed.....	Massachusetts.....	Yarmouth.....	1781	1860	F
William Reed.....	do.....	Marblehead.....	1776	1837	F
Henry Moore Ridgeley.....	Delaware.....	Dover.....	1779	1847	F
Nathaniel Ruggles.....	Massachusetts.....	Boston.....	1761	1819	F
James Schureman.....	New Jersey.....	Brunswick.....	1756	1824	F
Daniel Sheffey.....	Virginia.....	Wythe.....	1770	1830	F
Samuel Sherwood.....	New York.....	Delhi.....	1779	1862	F
Zebulon Rudd Shipherd.....	do.....	Granville.....	1768	1841	F
Amos Slaymaker.....	Pennsylvania.....	Lancaster.....	1755	1837	(No party)
Richard Stanford.....	North Carolina.....	Hawfields.....	1767	1816	D
Richard Stockton.....	New Jersey.....	Princeton.....	1764	1828	F
William Strong.....	Vermont.....	Hartford.....	1763	1840	D
Philip Stuart.....	Maryland.....	Port Tobacco.....	1760	1830	F
Lewis Burr Sturges.....	Connecticut.....	Fairfield.....	1763	1844	F
Samuel Taggart.....	Massachusetts.....	Colerain.....	1754	1825	F
Adamson Tannchill.....	Pennsylvania.....	Pittsburgh.....	1750	1820	D
Joel Thompson.....	New York.....	Smyrna.....	1758	1843	F
Roger Vose.....	New Hampshire.....	Walpole.....	1763	1841	F
Artemas Ward, Jr.....	Massachusetts.....	Boston.....	1762	1847	F
Daniel Webster.....	New Hampshire.....	Portsmouth.....	1782	1852	F
Leban Wheaton.....	Massachusetts.....	Easton.....	1754	1846	F
Francis White.....	Virginia.....	Romney.....	.....	1826	(No party)
Jeduthun Wilcox.....	New Hampshire.....	Orford.....	1768	1838	F
Elisha I. Winter.....	New York.....	Peru.....	1781	1849	F
Abiel Wood.....	Massachusetts.....	Wiscasset.....	1772	1834	F

<sup>1</sup> The initial D represents Democrat, F is for Federalist, R signifies Republican, and where no party affiliation is supplied in the *Biographical Directory of the American Congress* that fact is recorded.



## Votes by Party

<i>Affirmative</i>		<i>Negative</i>	
Democrats.....	74	Federalists.....	51
Federalists.....	4	Democrats.....	15
Unknown.....	3	Republican.....	1
	<hr/> 81	Unknown.....	4
			<hr/> 71

## Votes by Geographical Subdivision

<i>Affirmative</i>		<i>Negative</i>	
New England:		New England:	
Democrats..	4	Federalists..	27
Federalist..	1 5	Democrats..	2 29
Middle States: <sup>2</sup>		Middle States:	
Democrats..	27	Federalists..	19
Federalist..	1	Democrats..	5
Unknown... 1	29	Republican..	1
		Unknown... 2	27
South:		South:	
Democrats..	33	Democrats..	6
Federalist..	1	Federalists..	5
Unknown... 2	36	Unknown... 1	12
West: <sup>3</sup>		West:	
Democrats..	10	Democrats..	2
Federalist..	1 11	Unknown... 1	3
	<hr/> 81		<hr/> 71

<sup>2</sup> *New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Maryland.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ohio and Kentucky.*

Now, from this tabulation only one fact emerges: the purchase of Mr. Jefferson's library (however close the squeak) was not a triumph of the children of light over the powers of darkness, but a victory of the administration over the minority. It was less a successful skirmish in a struggle for cultural recognition than it was a battle of the caucus. In this, the Democratic whip came off second best to the Federalist. It was strictly a matter of the line; for the loyal opposition, it held with admirable firmness; in the case of the majority there was some reason for concern among the leaders because fifteen members had risen to the contra-call. Defections were few. The issue was lost in New England, a Federalist stronghold; it squeezed through the Middle States by two votes and in the

West by eight; it won in the almost-solid South. In North Carolina, Willis Alston had voted yea while his uncle, and fellow Democrat, Nathaniel Macon, had reason to be counted with those who disapproved.

As for Macon, there were probably extraneous considerations which explained his action. He had, for example, favored the War, but stoutly had opposed conscription and the levy of taxes. For a time, after 1806, when he espoused the cause of John Randolph, he had been estranged from Mr. Jefferson, but that breach had healed years before. Mr. Jefferson, on his part, considered Macon a "good old friend," and once in a letter assured him: "I wrote, dear Sir, with no other view than to pour my thoughts into your bosom." It is not unlikely, therefore, that Mr. Macon's rejection of the bill was based upon separable and distinguishable grounds from the objective *per se*, and was, in substance, the result of fear lest his acquiescence might be construed by implication to condone other and larger principles or policies or practices against which he held himself to be committed.

In this respect Mr. Macon was probably typical of many who ranged themselves against the purchase. Some, of course, acted merely as Federalists bound by duty to repudiate any democratic measure; but it would be a false oversimplification to assume that they entertained strong feelings of hostility to the Library or to the changes which the acquisition of the collection inescapably involved. On the contrary, their attitude more probably represented an inconsequential sacrifice to political expediency and independence. Had not the power of the majority assured the purchase, had their articulate opposition had the strength to prevent the continuation of the Library, they would not have been so reluctant to abandon books as they were then, to all outward appear-

ances indifferent to the prospect. The minority was exercising its only (and therefore most valued) perquisite: the right to bemoan extravagance. A few, on the other hand, were motivated by personal prejudice and unwillingness to participate in any movement which would accrue to the benefit of Mr. Jefferson. Private animosities directed toward the owner created blind spots which rendered invisible the advantageous aspects of the acquisition. "Pensioner Jefferson," they called him; and they were prepared urgently to advocate the creation of a new library, provided only that it were derived from another and less inimical source. But the proof that their disapprobation did not extend to the library itself is found in the fact that when the Jefferson books were installed in Washington, all but seven of the surviving Congressmen (there were 41) found occasion to borrow them.

This episode, in which the Library's interest became subordinate to a complex of larger concerns, is important only because it is not without parallels in history. The United States was engaged in a great and costly war. (It is true that General Jackson had won a smashing victory in the Louisiana bayous more than two weeks before the vote in the House was taken, but because of heavy snows the news of New Orleans did not reach Washington until February 6.) At a moment when there was talk of authorizing "the enlistment of minors . . . without the consent of their parents and guardians," a moment when fairly or unfairly there were charges of bungling and general indecisiveness, when there was sharp criticism of the conduct of military leaders and others in places of authority; when governmental frugality was as much an unavoidable necessity as it was a public virtue; when one Congress was to give way to another; at such a time the discussion of a substratum for a National

Library must have appeared to many as a fantastic and impertinent intrusion. In a crowded, harassed and earnest world it was difficult to make room for books; it was far more difficult to give their claims a full and impartial hearing. The wonder is not so much that they were secured as it is a wonder that they were remembered.

### *The Union of the Love of Liberty and Knowledge*

For the Library the consequence was a new dignity and a new dimension. Some persons there were who found a kind of symbolic significance in the transaction. As an instance, the *Essex Register*, in commenting on the Jefferson purchase, editorialized:

. . . It will remain, we trust, for future generations, an evidence of the literary treasures possessed by a man who had the honour of preparing the declaration of independence, and of the union of the love of liberty and knowledge in our country. It is an honour to our country to say, that when a national collection was destroyed, the private Library of a President could supply its place; when he was willing to dedicate it to the public use, the public sentiment was in consent with the purchase upon the most honourable terms; that the library which had been so well employed for the public benefit, was kept for the benefit of posterity. No circumstance could be better united with our patriotism, and in the history of the Library we shall never lose this pleasing recollection.

Moreover, there had been those spoken hints of a destiny beyond its present situation. Granting a future conjunction of favorable circumstance and benign accident, it might rise to great responsibilities in a world where learning was neither suspect nor an object of disdain. It had been called a substratum.

Whereas, in its former manifestation, it had been deformed by parsimony and disfigured by false and self-inflicted precepts, it might now claim its opportunities and move forward with the requiring times. It had been released from the



abrasive girdle of littleness. It had attracted the solicitous concern of distinguished personages. It had been renovated in a fashion exceeding any aspiration it had dared to entertain before. It had, in short, been given a chance.

More important, in practical terms, it had come to represent a not inconsiderable investment, and from this there had come also the assurance of permanence. It was now an acknowledged instrument for the guidance of a Nation which had successfully reaffirmed its freedom.

These were radical changes surely; some were the result of purely fortuitous influences; others sprang from a determination to avoid a repetition of early error. It was obvious, for example, that the Library, as reconstituted, must have for its routine operations a full-time steward, keeper, custodian, curator, or librarian (the title made little difference) who would devote his full-time and his undivided attention to the assignment. It was decided, therefore, to separate the office from the schizophrenized Clerk of the House of Representatives and thus fix more rigidly and more accountably the responsibilities of the Library post.

Therefore, on March 21, 1815, Mr. Madison made a "recess appointment" to the librarianship of Congress. It is said that the object of Presidential favor owed something to the fact that he had once dedicated a poetic effusion to the First Lady and although he privately considered her "perhaps a little too *embonpoint*," he withheld that ungallant opinion from the world until its circulation could do him no serious injury.

George Watterston was born on ship-board in New York harbor October 23, 1783. Eight years later his father, a native of Scotland, by trade a master builder, attracted by the public building program, brought his family to Washington to live, and eventually sent the son to

Charlotte Hall School in Maryland, where he seems to have acquired a sound classical education. Mr. Watterston was, therefore, one of those oddities of humankind, a long-time resident of the Federal City, who could remember "the windings of the picturesque stream called the Tiber, gliding along between magnificent oaks, and underwood, and expanding almost to the magnitude of a river as it flowed into the broad Potomac," and how "this stream . . . once called Goose Creek . . . [was] in spring and autumn overspread with wild ducks, and often penetrated as far as the present railroad depot by multitudes of shad, herrings, pike, perch, . . ." He had studied law, had been admitted to the bar, and had practiced before the local courts. His selection, however, was based upon the circumstance that he was Washington's only man of letters. Poet, novelist, journalist, pamphleteer; his contemporaries found in his work "many strokes of original beauty, energy of thought, and purity of style; his judgment marked with accuracy, perspicuity, and great deference."

As for his appearance, the usually caustic Anne Royall who once was tried as a common scold, described him as "a man of good size, neither spare nor robust; he is a fine figure, and possessed of some personal beauty; his complexion fair, his countenance striking, shows genius and deep penetration, marked with gravity, though manly and commanding." Mistress Anne went even further: "a sweet serenity diffuses itself over his countenance, which no accident can ruffle; and under the veil of retiring modesty, discovers his blushing honors thick upon him."

He had fought at Bladensburg, and after the unhappy experience sustained by American arms, had returned to Washington to find his home pillaged by the British.

Among his first efforts as Librarian of Congress were the recovery of any books

which might have escaped the Capitol fire, and the return of those books which were still on loan. These were placed in a "room sufficiently commodious and convenient" in the third story of the curious building where the Thirteenth Congress had met. It stood on the north side of E Street between 7th and 8th. Projected by Samuel Blodget, one of the earliest real estate speculators in Washington, designed by James Hoban, architect of the White House, it had been planned as a hotel which would be the first prize in a national lottery. It never served the purpose for which it was intended, but it had housed the first theater in Washington and had given shelter in its basement to immigrant "squatters" who took possession of it. Often the cause of litigation, the Government had finally assumed title to it in 1810, and now it accommodated the Patent Office, the General and City Post Offices, and the Congress and its committees.

In order to prepare an apartment for the Library it was necessary to finish the staircase, construct a passageway, paint the walls, purchase furniture and engage upholsterers. All in all these expenditures amounted to \$1,520.77. In the spring the Jefferson library was delivered.

These books were packed in the long pine boxes, divided in three tiers, in which they have been shelved at Monticello; in this respect Mr. Jefferson seems to have anticipated the "sectional book cases" of our own generation. Merely by covering the open ends it thus had been possible to provide adequate protection for carriage. By removing the covers the books were readied for use.

With the aid of a "Negro boy," at an honorarium of four dollars a month, and a "Negro man," at twenty-six dollars a month, the library apartment was arranged, the cases were stacked in order around the room, and some kind of delivery service was organized. Wood for

the fireplace was procured from a certain Mr. Farrel in midsummer, a brass fender was purchased, and, as autumn came the equipment was further augmented by the acquisition of a broom, a pair of shears, thirty-seven and a half cents worth of ink, various kinds of stationery, and a large supply of candles. Forty-eight descriptive labels were printed in large type ("each being a separate form") and these were attached to the shelves as a guide to the subjects of the books which each contained. Some of the books were sent out for binding or repairs. William Elliot furnished 11,100 bookplates and 11,100 "labels for the backs of books;" these were affixed in part by Michael Larnier, in part by the Negro assistants. Perhaps the addition of the shelf-mark indicia was the work of the Librarian himself. By far the most important intellectual exercise was the preparation of the catalog for the press.

Just what demands this work made on Mr. Watterston's talents is difficult to determine. The manuscript (the original was in Mr. Jefferson's own hand) had disappeared. Indeed, the Joint Committee was to go on record to the effect that "the only evidence of the literary services of the librarian, within the knowledge of your committee, is the publication of the catalogue with which we were presented at the time of the beginning of the session; and the merit of this work is altogether due to Mr. Jefferson, and not to the librarian of Congress."

But it is apparent that Mr. Watterston made some alterations in the interest of simplification. Mr. Jefferson, when asked how he liked it, replied: "Of course, you know, not so well as my own; yet I think it possible the alphabetical arrangement may be more convenient to readers generally than mine which was sometimes analytical, sometimes chronological, & sometimes a combination of both."



It was a "classed catalog," the books being divided according to a scheme of literary classification which Mr. Jefferson had adapted from Lord Bacon's classification of science, "according to the faculties of mind employed on them." The faculties were three: Memory, Reason and Imagination; from the first came history in all its forms, including most of the natural sciences and technology; from the second were derived philosophy, comprehending religion, law, mathematics, politics, economics, phonics, optics, astronomy, geography, etc.; and from imagination emerged the fine arts, embracing architecture, gardening, painting, sculpture, music, poetry, drama, oratory, bibliography, and criticism. Altogether there were forty-four distinguishable groups. This scheme was to control the arrangement of the Library's collections for nearly a century.

By the middle of October 1815, the catalog was in press, and copies were delivered sometime prior to December 4. Six hundred copies were printed at a cost of \$2.25 each. The result was even more inacceptable to Congress than to Mr. Jefferson to whom Watterston confided "The Library Committee are dissatisfied with me for having the catalogue printed without having waited to consult their *superior judgment*." In its published report of January 26, 1816, the Committee's criticism of the recondite organization of data was both bitter and outspoken: "Your committee are persuaded, that however ingenious, scientific, philosophical, and useful such a catalogue may be in the possession of a gentleman who, as was the case with the former proprietor of this, now the Library of Congress, has classed his books himself, who alone has access to them, and has become from long habit and experience as perfectly familiar with every book in his library, as a man who has long lived in a city is familiar

with every street, square, lane, and alley in it, still this form of catalogue is much less useful in the present state of our library, consisting chiefly of miscellanies, not always to be classed correctly under any particular head, than a plain catalogue in the form which had been adopted for the formation of the catalogue of the old library, which probably might not have cost more than one hundred dollars, if that much, whilst the catalogue with which we were presented, including three copies of it bound calf gilt, costs the United States thirteen hundred and sixty dollars and fifty cents, one third more than the annual appropriation made heretofore by Congress for the additional increase of the library, and more than one twentieth of the actual cost of our whole library."

The report is silent on the controversial point of the title; the publication was issued as the *Catalogue of the Library of the United States*. Now, some commentators have argued that this designation is clear evidence that the national function of the Library was officially recognized and acknowledged at that time. Even the meticulous Librarian of the later nineteenth century, Ainsworth Rand Spofford, considered the style "noteworthy." On the negative side however, are the following considerations: (1) the catalog was prepared and issued during the absence of Congress from Washington, (2) the Joint Committee on the Library apparently was not consulted, (3) the Joint Committee disavowed the make-up of the catalog and may have intended its disavowal to apply to the publication generally, (4) the designation has not been used since. It seems likely that Mr. Watterston sought the change. In his account of expenditures drawn up for submission to the Comptroller's Office in the Treasury, he referred to "the Library of the U. States," and this was allowed December 18, 1815, by John

Gaillard, President *pro tempore* of the Senate, and Henry Clay, Speaker of the House. And yet it would seem to be stretching a point to construe the allowance as a sanction.

It will be remembered that the Jefferson purchase had involved a broadened policy for the scope of the collections; classes of literature, previously excluded had come to be accepted as appropriate. But however catholic the tastes of the former proprietor were, and they were indeed encyclopedic, the catalog of 1815 demonstrated that in some disciplines, at least the Jefferson library was no very great shucks, while in others there was an alarming lack of balance. This was shocking to the Joint Committee which pointed out in its report of January 26, 1816:

. . . It is enough to cast a rapid glance over the catalogue of the library of Congress to be immediately sensible of the immense *hiatus* which some of the departments of arts or sciences exhibit. Some of the branches of the arts and sciences are swelled to a prodigious size, which at the same time that it is by no means a certain proof of a greater degree of health in these parasite branches, manifests every symptom of threatening decay in the tree itself. This was observable likewise in the old library of Congress, although in a less degree. This result is not to be wondered at, if we consider that the inconsiderable sums put from time-to-time at the disposal of the joint library committee precluded the possibility of their availing themselves of the many opportunities which, for twenty-five years past, were daily offering in Europe of purchasing large collections of very valuable books on reasonable terms. Those opportunities are not yet all gone by, and your committee think that the convulsions of the eastern might, in a literary point of view, be made conducive to the interests of the western world. The present library of Congress is a good foundation; and one half of the sum which it has cost, judiciously employed under the direction of the joint Library committee, would place within the reach of every member of Congress all the most valuable books in every department of arts and sciences, of which there is now such a lamentable deficiency.

The objective of collections adequate to legislative needs was constantly before the

Committee. When it reported, January 6, 1817, it was given a special emphasis: "In order the better to promote the views of Congress in establishing a Congressional Library, and the more securely to provide for, as far as attainable, a proportionately equal application of the library fund to the several branches of human knowledge, and thereby stamp the Congressional library with that degree of usefulness contemplated in its establishment, the committee invite the chairmen of the several committees in both Houses, to furnish the library committee with a list of such books or maps, as may be deemed by them more particularly to refer to the business devolving upon each respective committee."

Here again, Mr. Watterston may have been more ambitious and less discriminating than his "board of trustees," for shortly after taking office he had inserted a "card" in the public prints, issued from the "Library of the United States" and signed by the "Librarian of Congress" drawing attention to the opportunities as he envisaged them. "Congress," he wrote, "having supplied the loss occasioned by the rude and conflagrating hand of our late enemy by the purchase of a library perhaps equal in value, as far as it extends, to any in Europe, and intending, as they no doubt do [Congress was in recess], to make it the great national repository of literature and science, and in some instances of the arts also, it is desirable that American authors, engravers, and painters who are solicitous to preserve their respective productions as mementos of the times, would transmit to the Library a copy of such work as they may design for the public eye." This course, he believed, will "serve not only as a literary history of this now interesting country [what had it been before?], but will also tend to exhibit the progress and improvement of the arts." As for himself, "the Librarian, so far as his power and means extend, will



take due care that such productions, literary or graphic, as may be forwarded to him shall be properly preserved and advantageously exhibited."

These extracts are illustrative of ancient conflicts which have in the present day their surviving counterparts: the general library opposed to the special library; the great repository of national genius in all its forms ranged against the most authoritative records of other societies and other peoples; precedent versus possibility; wants known, and therefore wants precise, as distinguished from anticipated, and consequently problematical, requirements; the claims of selection confronted by the claims of comprehensiveness; the frailty of human judgment in contrast to the potentiality of chaos following the abdication of judgment values.

These extracts are illustrative also of the difficulties of the choice and the still greater difficulties of effective compromise. And yet the mean, however and wherever hidden by prejudice and misconception, has been discovered and made to serve at least a partially satisfactory purpose.

But for Mr. Watterston, the dilettante, the amateur, the man of creative powers, on one side, and men like Senators Fromentin, Goldsborough, and Hunter or Representatives Taylor, Hopkinson and Tucker, in some respects more learned, more practical, by duty more accountable, and, in terms of library management and control, infinitely wiser and more experienced, on the other, the divergence must sometimes have been sharp and sometimes even acrimonious. Mr. Watterston was not a person graciously to receive guidance nor was he thick-skinned enough to accept rebuke without deep and vituperative resentment. It may be that his was the most treacherous of attributes: a sense of superiority.

On the other hand his energy and enthusiasm communicated themselves to

many of those who called upon his services. He appears to have done an excellent job in laying out the Library; the apartment in Blodget's "Hotel" was "very beautiful" and seemed "to meet with the approbation of all." Up the new staircase trudged John C. Calhoun to examine Ray's *Horrors of Slavery*, Daniel Webster absorbed Pascal's *Thoughts*, Henry Clay consulted *Aristotle*. For all of them these excursions into literature involved a journey, for the Congress met that year in the "Brick Capitol" on First Street, where the Supreme Court Building now stands.

In order to provide a more convenient location, Senator Fromentin, for the Joint Committee, introduced a resolution, February 18, 1817, charging the Commissioner of Public Buildings with the duty "to cause to be erected and fitted up for the reception of the Library of Congress a suitable building, upon a plan to be approved by the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives to be situated on Delaware Avenue, north of the Capitol." Nothing came of it. Instead it was removed to temporary quarters in the attic of the Capitol in 1818.

### *A Region of Learning*

Fanny Wright, who saw the new location in the upper story of the north wing, during her first visit to the United States, in 1820, expressed the sentiment that "a native of England now feels awkward at finding [the Library] bestowed in a few small apartments; at present it comprises little more than a collection supplied by Mr. Jefferson, but a stated sum being appropriated annually to its enlargement, the spoliations of war will soon, I trust, be effaced." She concluded with a prophecy: "These volumes, however, marked with the name of America's president and philosopher, will always constitute the most interesting portion of the national library."

The Librarian seems to have found it a livelier and more engaging spot, "a region of learning, where like the Alps, books on books arose." It was, he wrote, in the person of one of his fictional characters, a room "filled with honourable members and their ladies, more intent, I thought, on gazing at pictures, than on feasting their reason; I confess I felt a little odd in being so suddenly soused among such honourable company; but knowing that I contributed as much to the public library as any one else, I thought it was best to stalk about as if it was my own, look big, and take no notice of any body."

But certainly the situation was far from perfect; the place was crowded, and there was a threat of stagnation and nullity. Something of this atmosphere of frustration is conveyed by the report which that "biblical cormorant," Senator Mahlon Dickerson, on behalf of the Joint Committee, presented on December 19, 1820: "They [i.e., the members of the Committee] had intended to lay out the greater part of the funds on hand in the purchase of books during the late recess of Congress, but, being informed, by the librarian, that no preparations were making, or expected to be made, before the meeting of Congress, for putting up additional shelves in the library rooms, and that a large portion of the books purchased during the last year were still lying upon the tables, it was not thought expedient to make any considerable purchase of books before the meeting of Congress." For the builders of libraries there is no lure to discouragement equal to the lure of a visible arrearage. It is to the everlasting credit of Mr. Watterston and the Committee that these books were somehow cataloged and that their assimilation was gradually contrived. Perhaps they were sustained in their efforts and their planning by the knowledge that suitable accommodations were in prospect.

Simultaneously there was an awakening public sense of the intellectual advantages accruing from support of the library movement which was then taking a new form in other parts of the world. For example, under the heading, "The National Library", the following article was published in the *Daily National Intelligencer* for Thursday, August 28, 1823:

We are not in the habit of occupying ourselves or our readers with many details of foreign affairs, or of taking any very warm part, either in a way of praise or censure, on what passes on the other side of the ocean. Not that we are indifferent about the tendencies of events in any part of the world, but our chief concern is with our own country, and we have so much to say, and to do, within ourselves, that we are not desirous of diverting the minds of our fellow citizens to distant objects, and to measures of policy, in which there is found so little to approve or imitate. But, it sometimes happens that our European news reminds us so strongly of desirable objects within our own reach, that we are led to dwell with more than common interest upon them. We were put into this train of thought by reading the proceedings of the British Parliament, relative to the donation made by the King, to the nation, of his late father's magnificent library. This collection of books was one of the private objects that occupied the attention of the late King almost half a century, and it is said to be now worth £200,000 sterling, nearly equal to \$900,000. The discussion in Parliament related to the use and disposal of this invaluable national property. It is proposed to add it to the Libraries already in the British Museum, which now contains 150,000 volumes, and the King's Library contains 65,000 volumes, of which there are about 12,000 duplicates. To provide better and safer rooms for this deposit, suitable for the access of the public at proper seasons, the Parliament has voted £40,000, nearly \$180,000.

In the course of debate, and to shew the interest felt by the public mind in these National Institutions, Mr. Banks stated that 2,000 persons visited the Library in the British Museum in *one* day.

A similar Library in Paris, is said to contain 450,000 volumes. Such facts need no comment.

Among the things that please us most in our Capitol, is the noble room destined to contain the Library of Congress. It is in the most delightful part of the building, commanding a fascinating view of the most populous part of our



city, and of the whole length of the Avenue that connects it with the other Public Offices, and the President's House. We wish we could promise ourselves to see the day, when it should be more than half filled, with books of acknowledged excellence, in every branch of science, and collected from every country. We should like it, also, to be something more national, and truly literary in its arrangement and objects, than it has hitherto been. Why should it not be accessible every day, at proper hours between sun-rise and sun-set, to every citizen who may wish to avail himself of the use of such treasures of wisdom as may be collected there for the public benefit? It may, of course, require more arduous duties than one person alone could discharge, to attend to it; but, if the nation felt interested in accumulating and maintaining such a monument of its literary taste, it would not begrudge the small appropriation necessary to render it a constantly increasing source of pleasure and profit, not only to Congress, nor to the reading part of the population of Washington, but to all our countrymen, and even foreigners who pass through, or who occasionally reside in, the Metropolis.

The present Library will, we believe, soon be transferred to the splendid room now finishing for its reception. We do hope, that the wisdom and liberality of Congress will then make such regulations, for the increase and utility of this noble institution, as will contribute greatly to the improvement of our country, the satisfaction of literary men of leisure, who reside near the Seat of Government, and will increase our respectability, in this respect, in the eyes of foreign nations. It is obvious, that a certain frivolous class of books may, and ought to be excluded; but there should be no work of high character and unquestionable utility, published in any part of the world, which ought not, in time, to find its way into the National Library of the United States. A scientific committee, such as is now annually constituted by Congress, with the aid of a regular annual appropriation, of a reasonable amount, would know how to effect these objects in the best way.

These were slender straws, of course, but they were in the wind, and some blew upon Congressional floors. As early as 1816, the privileges of the Library had been extended to "the attorney general of the United States and the members of the diplomatic corps on the same terms and conditions, as is enjoyed by the

judges of the supreme court." The exclusive clientele had almost imperceptibly relaxed to include an infinitesimally larger public. Influential officers of government, like Richard Rush, sought courtesies for distinguished men of letters, and although their intercessions were at first unavailing, pressures developed which soon were to compel release.

The Library took possession of the "splendid room" early in 1824, and, sensing the opportunities fresh or long-postponed which suitable accommodation offered, Joel Poinsett, of whom it was said that his "devotion to learning was scarcely excelled by his readiness to serve his country," introduced, on January 21, as a member of the Library Committee, a successful resolution calling upon the Committee on Ways and Means "to inquire into the expediency of appropriating five thousand dollars for the use of the Library of Congress."

A month later Congressman Louis McLane, of Delaware, reported, for his colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee, that they had found "that the sum which it had been usual to appropriate, annually, for the use of the Library, is little more than sufficient to purchase *Laws*, *Reports of Cases*, *periodical publications*, and such works as the Library Committee are annually under the necessity of purchasing." As for the balance, it was so small, "as, generally, to confine the purchases merely to works of the day; and if, on any occasion, the committee are enabled to purchase a standard work, the cost is augmented nearly a hundred per cent, by the duties of importation, and the profits of the bookseller."

To Mr. McLane, "an enemy of waste, whether of money or time," who, according to a biographer, "conducted any enterprise entrusted to him with order and efficiency," this was a shocking state of affairs. His Committee had taken counsel.

"By their own observation, as well as by a reference to the gentlemen charged with the particular superintendence of this subject, the committee have", he announced, "discovered the Library of Congress, in its present state, to be defective in all the principal branches of literature; and they deem it of the first necessity, that this deficiency should be speedily supplied, at least in the important branches of *Law, Politics, Commerce, History, and Geography*, as most useful to the Members of Congress."

There were considerations of the source of supply, and the report continued to explain "that most of the works, which are now required for the foregoing purposes, are not republished in the United States, and . . . for this reason, as for motives of economy, it is deemed advisable to make the purchases in Europe;" something that could not "be effected without an appropriation considerably larger than that annually given." For example, the Committee was aware of the fact that "a drawback, to a considerable amount," was "allowed on the exportation of books from England, of which the Library Committee could avail themselves in their purchases, and a discount of twenty-five percent." was "allowed by all the booksellers in London, on the catalogue prices, where made." The Committee was therefore of the opinion that "a saving of more than fifty percent." might be effected "by importing books from England." There was the question of books printed in languages other than English. It was true that "a much larger saving might be made on French books," but the Committee was "of opinion that it would be better to purchase English books and English translations of foreign books, in all cases where such translations have been made." Consequently, "they would propose, only to import such standard works, in foreign languages, as have not been translated,

and of those, only such as cannot be dispensed with."

When the Committee considered, "not only the utility, but the absolute necessity of an extensive and judiciously selected library" for the use of Congress; when they reflected "upon its advantages, for the purposes as well of amusement as instruction," they were persuaded that it could not be "too early supplied with all the important standard works, in every department." Nor were they able to "perceive any well founded objection to any appropriation, for this object, of a sum very little exceeding the amount, which individual taste and liberality often annually" bestowed "upon private selections."

The report concluded with a flat declaration: "The committee believe, that the defects in the present library cannot be supplied for a less sum than *five thousand dollars*, which, in their opinion, may be afforded without inconvenience to the public resources; and they therefore report a bill."

It was not taken up in Committee of the Whole until May 22, when it was passed; the Senate passed it on the twenty-sixth; it was immediately sent to the White House and the President signed it the same day.

From the perspective of nearly a century and a quarter, this legislation and the report which led to its enactment have a nostalgic quality which identifies the present with tradition. Then, as now, the annual book fund was sufficient only to the maintenance of subscriptions and to the procurement of the current products of the press. Then, as now, the lack of adequate provision forced neglect of materials of retrospective and antiquarian interest. Then, as now, there was that realization of "the absolute necessity of an extensive and judiciously selected library." Then, but fortunately now a little less, there were, in some quarters, misgivings con-



cerning the actual utility of literature presented in languages other than our own. Then the problems were microscopic; now they are magnified; but they are the same problems and they are familiar.

But the episode had a particular importance for the reason that, for the first time, works of merely cultural and intellectual significance, as contrasted with works of precedent and legislative practicality, were recognized as having their own and proper place. An extensive collection meant a comprehensive collection, with no exceptions save mediocrity.

There was, in addition, an appreciation of, and sympathy for, the economical and mechanical difficulties of acquisition. As one result of the report, Senator Mahlon Dickerson, chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library, secured the passage of a measure directing the Secretary of the Treasury "to remit all duties upon such books, maps, and charts, as have been . . . or hereafter may be, imported into the United States, by the authority of the Joint Library Committee of Congress, for the use of the Library of Congress."

The Library Act of May 26, 1824 (one of 47 signed by the President that day), contained an appropriation of fifteen hundred and forty-six dollars "for the purchase of furniture for the new library." On the same day a resolution was approved which directed "that the portrait of Columbus, presented to the Nation, by G. G. Barrell, United States Consul at Malaga, be placed in the library of Congress." The text contained a change in the form of the resolution as first presented by Chairman Dickerson on March 29; then it had provided that "the picture . . . be placed in the national library."

### *Light in the Library*

Indeed, the "Library hall," became, by common consent, the most beautiful room

in the Federal City. And then, on the evening of December 22, 1825, a gentleman in one of its galleries read late by candle light. Later, toward eleven o'clock, when Congressman Edward Everett, who, with his wife, was returning from a reception given by Senator Richard M. Johnson, passed the Capitol, he observed a strange glow which he supposed to come from a lamp or from "a fire imperfectly extinguished in some of the fireplaces." He lived near by, and when he had driven Mrs. Everett home, he determined to return to the Capitol in order to ascertain the cause of the light which seemed to come from the Library. Arrived, he experienced some delay in persuading the sentries to make an inspection. Most reluctantly a sergeant, named Vincent, agreed to go to the Library door, which was locked, and to take a look through the keyhole. He reported to Mr. Everett that nothing unusual was taking place, and the gentleman from Massachusetts, who, as an ardent and active member of the Library Committee, was conscious of a special responsibility, allowed himself to be "overpowered by the continual assurance that it was an ordinary appearance," and took his departure with the admonition, "I have done my duty, you must now do yours."

The warning disturbed Sergeant Vincent, and sometime later, he went to the western steps to reconnoitre. By this time the blaze was so strong, that he felt obliged to endeavor to open the huge mahogany doors, although he did not consider himself authorized to use force in securing admittance. Instead, he scurried around the neighborhood making several unsuccessful inquiries before he obtained the address of the Librarian. The sergeant then betook himself to Mr. Watterston's residence on Second Street, East, between Pennsylvania Avenue and C Street, South, roused that gentleman

from his slumbers and escorted him to the Capitol. On opening the door the fire in the gallery was discovered. A bucket or two of water would have extinguished it, but there were no buckets at hand and the distance from the nearest pump, which was located on the other side of the building, was too great to permit "a rapid supply by a few hands."

In the Capitol yard was a small bell, which was used to call the workmen together. This proved the only means for giving the alarm. Meanwhile Sergeant Vincent and his sentries ran "through the neighborhood" to awaken the inhabitants. Congressman Everett had retired, "but on the first touch of the bell, hastened to the Capitol." The engine house was locked, but the doors were forced, a few buckets were procured, and with these a little water was carried to the Library. Rapidly Members of Congress and the local citizenry responded to the summons, and, after a time an "admirable hose," several hundred feet in length, was dragged through the immense building and into the Library "hall." It is of record that Mr. Daniel Webster and Chairman Dickerson were among the gallant company whose efforts saved the Capitol. To everyone's relief the loss was not too heavy. No books were destroyed which could not be replaced; the greater part were duplicate sets of public documents. Others, of course were injured by water and by the rough treatment they were given by those who hastily removed them from the wooden shelves. These, however, were susceptible of restoration and repair. A versifier contributed some lines on the incident to the *National Intelligencer* which concluded—

Precaution, now, forever will prevent

A loss which all the Union would deplore.

But, after a perfunctory investigation of

the cause, and the adoption of a few preventive measures, the whole affair was dismissed on the comforting assumption that what had happened twice would never happen again.

Other events were less spectacular. Mr. Watterston was never idle; there were always things for him to do; what with the steady growth of the collections and the increasing incursions of readers he had little time for his private literary pursuits. Of himself he wrote in the third person, "His knowledge of books and the extent of his reading and attainments were such that it was thought by those who visited the Library, he was acquainted with the contents of every volume in it." That is not entirely inconceivable in view of the fact that he was not only the administrator and interpreter, but the cataloger, the classifier and the labeler as well.

A retroactive act, approved May 24, 1828, authorized him to employ an assistant at an annual compensation of \$800, beginning March 4, 1827. For this post he selected Mr. Edward B. Stelle, who, for a time had worked without pay, and more recently had received a salary amounting to a little more than a dollar a day.

The demands for reference service were handled by Mr. Watterston himself. He was, it was declared, constantly "called upon for facts, dates, passages, acts, official communications, and even lines of poetry." Moreover it was necessary that the Librarian "have a knowledge of bibliography," and that he "be able to point out the best and rarest editions, as well as to furnish lists of books to the committee." He kept a ledger account of books borrowed and books returned.

The rules governing access to the Library were strict. Only Members of Congress, persons whom they introduced, or those who for some special and temporary reason could convince the Librarian of their



eligibility, were allowed within its precincts. The regulations were, however, generously interpreted, with the result that increasingly the Library became a resort for scholars and gentlemen of scholarly leanings. Young Rufus Choate, for example, while working in the office of William Wirt, Attorney General, wrote to a friend in Andover:

. . . I am sadly at a loss for books here, but I sit three days every week in the large Congressional library, and am studying our own extensive ante-revolutionary history, and reading your favorite Gibbon. The only classic I can get is Ovid; and while I am about it, let me say, too, that I read every day some chapters of the English Bible.

Another was Jared Sparks, who during his southern tour in 1826—and who considered Washington “a tedious place to all but ambitious, giddy-brained politicians and those who love to labor and suffer for the public good,”—made several visits to the Library. Thus in his journal for May 18 he recorded:

Passed the whole day in the Congress library, examining the Department on American History and Politics. On American History the library is exceedingly meagre, containing nothing but the commonest books; but on American politics it is full, particularly to the year 1808, when Mr. Jefferson left the government. It was his habit to preserve pamphlets and papers, and they are all deposited in this library. Dine with E. E. [Edward Everett]

In the year when Andrew Jackson became President, the Library of Congress had grown from 6,500 volumes to 15,000 volumes, but for Mr. Watterston a blow fell on May 28, 1829, when he and, quite incidentally, Mr. Stelle were relieved of their positions. Watterston was the unwilling victim of his own errors of judgment. He had been too staunch, too articulate, too literate a Whig; he had permitted the Library to be connected with activities of partisan and passionate politics; he had displayed traits and mannerisms which his detractors could

call “supercilious,” he had been too attached to the personal interests of Henry Clay; he had, so some believed, failed scrupulously to mind his own business; he had, in other words, been guilty of many faults each of which was anathema to General Jackson; and, worst of all, he had identified himself with the “outs.” For the rest of his life, he was to nurse a grievance and for most of it he was to labor and connive for the restoration of his office, but always these efforts were to be rewarded with disappointment. In his career there was a homily to be learned by those who came after him. He had been brilliant, he had been industrious, he had accomplished fine and often constructive purposes, but he had been Librarian of one side of the aisle rather than Librarian of Congress. The character of the institution would change to reflect the character of the man who took his place.

#### *Amiable Gentleman.*

John Silva Meehan, in whose “integrity, diligence and discretion,” that one-time border captain, Andrew Jackson, reposed both “special trust and confidence,” succeeded to the librarianship on the “twenty-eighth day of May A. D. 1829, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the fifty-third.”

A native of New York, where he was born February 6, 1790, where he received “a good education,” and where he grew to manhood, Mr. Meehan, early in life, mastered the art of printing. About 1811 he removed to Burlington, New Jersey, in order to associate himself with David Allinson, of the Lexicon Press, in the production of Richard S. Coxe’s *New Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*. That was a formidable enterprise extending over several years. The discouragement which not infrequently beset its sponsors is apparent from the Preface of the *American Editor*. It begins with the statement:

"Our undertaking is at length accomplished," and continues, "In the prosecution of it, difficulties have arisen which we have laboured to surmount; allurements from a task so repulsive have presented themselves which we have endeavoured to withstand: indolence and wearisomeness, with the necessary avocations of business, have not infrequently withdrawn us from our toils, and we have returned to them without any vivid emotions of satisfaction or of pleasure." It was issued in 1813 with the names of forty-eight publishers blocked upon its imprint. With the completion of the "so repulsive" task, Mr. Meehan secured a commission as midshipman and served on board the "Fire-Fly," a brig of 33 tons, until the close of the war. He then declined an appointment as lieutenant in the Marine Corps, and returned to his Burlington Press. In 1814, he married Margaret Jones Mornington, and, shortly thereafter, moved to Philadelphia where he entered into partnership with Robert Anderson as printer and publisher.

In 1818, the firm of Anderson and Meehan initiated the publication of the *Latter Day Luminary*, a religious monthly issued under the auspices of a committee of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions. Four years later the partners transferred their business to Washington which, as a result of the location of Columbian College (now George Washington University) in that place, was rapidly becoming a center for Baptist interests. There, on February 2, 1822, he launched the *Columbian Star*, a weekly newspaper devoted to the religious and educational work of the denomination. He was, it was reported, "a great tract and Sunday School gentleman."

Three and a half years later, he resigned his interest in the paper, and early in 1826 purchased the *Washington Gazette*. John Quincy Adams once recorded in his memoirs that he had it on excellent author-

ity that Meehan was, in fact, only the nominal owner of the *Gazette*; that John H. Eaton (Peggy O'Neale's prospective husband and Andrew Jackson's biographer and future Secretary of War) had written a letter making himself responsible, and that John P. Van Ness endorsed the notes, but that the paper had actually been purchased by a subscription, to which several persons had contributed, and he had been obliged to sue the notes. But because he doubted his informant's inclination "to tell the whole truth relating to the transaction," Adams had not pressed for details.

Upon becoming the proprietor, Mr. Meehan changed the name of the *Gazette* to the *United States Telegraph*, and remained its publisher from February 6 until October 17, 1826, when Duff Green assumed complete direction of it. At the time of his appointment as Librarian of Congress, Mr. Meehan was serving as secretary of the Board of Trustees of Columbian College. The new office was said to have been a reward for support in the presidential campaign.

In appearance, he was described by a contemporary as "a light figure, of common height, with tolerable features," but from a surviving daguerreotype it is apparent that he was, on the contrary, remarkably handsome, possessed of regular features, a well molded chin, thin lips, hair worn long upon the temples, a straight nose, bushy brows, and fine eyes behind the crow's feet which betrayed his self-possession and good humor.

The manner of his appointment made enmities inevitable. Watterston, whom he displaced, drew upon his own picturesque vocabulary for vilification, castigation and ridicule. He called his successor a "creature" of the new and tyrannical administration. He insisted that Meehan was nothing more than a proof-reader who was "never fitted for such a



place;" that the usurper had had but a "very ordinary" education, that he had "no fondness for reading," and that therefore he could "not make himself useful as a Librarian;" that the interloper, the "furious locofoco," was acquainted with no language but English, and that he was far from being well versed in literature. Watterston's stout ally, Anne Royall, denounced Mr. Meehan (whose name she could not spell) as a sycophant, "cringing to the great, and insolent to those of low degree."

But to his friends "he was remarkably punctual and assiduous in his duties, unobtrusive, moral, and domestic in his habits, and of sterling integrity as a man." Others testify to his "amiable manners." Certainly, his long and honored career was to be the final refutation of disgruntled and disheartened critics. He was an excellent executive officer, methodical in his habits, meticulous in financial matters, selfcomposed in every situation. He succeeded admirably, perhaps, surprisingly, where his predecessor had so signally failed, in keeping the Library out of politics. His relations with the Congress were cordial and based upon mutual respect. "Your friend and obedient servant," he usually subscribed himself. It is unlikely that his ambitions for the Library ever outran, or ran counter to, the objectives of his Committee, indeed it is even possible that he was somewhat deficient in imagination and the ability either to prevail or to persuade. It is almost certain that he was content with his office, his surroundings and his prestige. On the other hand, his contributions to librarianship were negligible; he developed no elaborate techniques; he formed no vast collections; he devised no innovations of service; he did little (if he did anything) to extend the boundaries of knowledge. Professionally he was commonplace; but he was efficient and

trustworthy and universally acceptable. Intellectually, as well as characteristically, he was a very modest man.

But if he could not invent, he could at least absorb. Early in his career, the Joint Committee authorized him, at the expense of the Library fund, to visit the public libraries in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, West Point and Boston, for the purpose of familiarizing himself with the state of the art, particularly with reference to methods employed for the preservation of collections, and the most appropriate manner of presenting exhibits.

Policy, of course, was in the hands of the Committee; it was his duty merely to execute it. If there was no discernible plan for the development of the Library, it was because of the constantly changing membership in the body which controlled the purpose and the purse. Mr. Meehan would place orders for such books as the Committee might select, he would pay such bills as the Committee approved, but he was allowed little opportunity for initiative and resourcefulness. As a consequence his tour of duty, covering a period of thirty-two years, cannot be understood as an administration. It was only a long assignment.

And yet the era which it has come to represent was of incalculable importance in the history of the institution, marking as it did, an extension of library privileges, the first steps toward departmental organization, the inauguration of international exchange, and the early, fumbling, completely unsatisfactory experience with copyright deposit. It was equally important in its negative aspects, in the proposals which were rejected, in the offers which were declined, and in the opportunities which were lost.

As for changes in scope, they began on January 13, 1830, when a Resolution was approved, authorizing the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House

"to grant the use of the books in the library of Congress, to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, the Postmaster General, the Secretary of the Senate, and Clerk of the House of Representatives, the Chaplains of Congress, and any individual, when in the District of Columbia, who may have been President of the United States, at the times and on the same terms, conditions, and restrictions, as Members of Congress are allowed to use said books."

Thus after repeated reverses, the constituency contemplated for the Library in the phantom proposals of Elbridge Gerry, forty years before, was completed by the inclusion of the Cabinet. The action, of course, was permissive only; Congress retained complete control of, and responsibility for, the maintenance and development of the Library, but by granting the use of the collections to the heads of the executive departments, on terms equal to the terms imposed upon itself, it had, as in the case of the earlier measure on behalf of the judiciary, recognized a further opportunity of the Library to serve the Nation in the conduct of the Government's business. At the same time it is perfectly true that the privileges were *ex officio* and therefore personal; the Library of Congress was no more a Library of the United States than it had been before. Minor officers and clerks generally had to depend upon the libraries established in their own departments for reference in the performance of their duties.

The next significant development concerned the law collections. These had been carefully enlarged as a result of the enthusiastic and thoughtful suggestions of the Justices of the Supreme Court. In this work Joseph Story took a particularly active part. For example, he once wrote to Edward Everett: "I entirely agree with you respecting the Civil Law books

to be placed in the Congress Library," and explained this attitude by remarking that "it would be a sad dishonor of a national Library not to contain the works of Cujacius, Vinnius, Heineccius, Brissotius, Voet, etc.," because "they are often useful for reference, and sometimes indispensable for a common lawyer."

As early as 1816, a bill had been introduced into the Senate providing for the establishment of a law library for the use of the Supreme Court; and once in 1826 and again in 1828, Representative Charles Anderson Wickliffe, of Kentucky, had submitted resolutions instructing the Library Committee to inquire into the expediency of separating the law books from the other books in the Library of Congress and placing them under the superintendence of the Supreme Court. Nothing came of them. Finally, on December 14, 1831, on motion of Felix Grundy, the Senate "Resolved, That the Committee on the judiciary be instructed to inquire into the expediency of providing a law library for the use of the Supreme Court of the United States," and on the twentieth day of the following month Senator William Learned Marcy, for the Committee, reported a bill "to increase and improve the law department of the Library of Congress." It became a law July 14, 1832.

The first section provided "that it shall be the duty of the librarian to prepare an apartment near to, and connected by an easy communication with that in which the library of Congress is now kept, for the purpose of a law library; to remove the law books, now in the Library, into such apartment; and to take charge of the law library, in the same manner as he is now required to do with the library of Congress."

The second section declared "that the Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States shall have free access to the



said law library; and they are, hereby, authorized and empowered to make such rules and regulations for the use of the same, by themselves and the attorneys and counsellors, during the sittings of the said court, as they shall deem proper: *Provided*, such rules and regulations shall not restrict the President of the United States, the Vice President, or any member of the Senate or House of Representatives, from having access to the said library, or using the books therein, in the same manner that he now has, or may have, to use the books of the Library of Congress."

The third section went on to prescribe "that the law library shall be part of the library of Congress, subject to the same regulations, except such alterations as are herein provided for, as now are, or hereafter shall be established for the library of Congress; and the incidental expenses of the law library shall be paid out of the appropriations for the library of Congress."

The fourth and concluding section appropriated, "for the present year, a sum not exceeding five thousand dollars, and a further annual sum of one thousand dollars, for the period of five years, to be expended in the purchase of law books; and that the librarian shall make the purchases of the books for the law library, under such directions, and pursuant to such catalogue [want-list], as shall be furnished him by the chief justice of the United States."

Accordingly, 2,011 volumes of legal literature (including 639 volumes from Mr. Jefferson's library) were removed from the collections and placed in a room north of the main library. Here they remained until 1843 when they were transferred to an apartment on the west side of the basement in the Capitol's north wing. This was near the Chambers of the Supreme Court. In 1860, when the Court took over the former Senate Chamber on the east side of the principal story, the law

collection was established in the room, immediately underneath, which the Court had just vacated. There a portion of the law collection is still maintained.

Now, the significance of the law of July 14, 1832, resides not in the fact that by it a specific portion of the collection was withdrawn and set apart, but in the fact that authority for the formulation of rules and regulations governing the use of the law collection, and the right to approve and make purchases for addition to it, was abandoned by Congress in favor of another branch of government. The Congress guaranteed to its Members the continuation of the privileges of access; the books constituting the law library remained a part of the Library of Congress; the Librarian of Congress, and not an officer of the Court, was made responsible for its care and for the execution of an approved acquisitions program, but the general supervision of the law library was placed in the hands of the Justices. No longer could it be said that the single purpose of the Library was to serve Congress. Henceforth it was to have two masters. Neither should it have been said (as the uncritical sometimes have said) that the law library was in any sense independent of the Library of Congress. It was specifically nothing of the sort, and those who refer to the creation of a distinct law "department" would do well to examine the text, for the only mention of a "department" is found in the title where it obviously signifies (in one of its commonest meanings) a *classification of literature* rather than an administrative unit.

But the act of July 14, 1832, contained still another important clause, for by authorizing the Justices to grant certain privileges to "attorneys and counsellors," a professional, as distinguished from an exclusively congressional or judicial or governmental library was established. Thus during the January term of 1833 a

new rule, No. 39, was adopted by the Court (7 Peters iv) which ordered:

... that during the session of the court, any gentleman of the bar having a cause on the docket, and wishing to use any book or books in the law library, shall be at liberty, upon application to the clerk of the court, to receive an order to take the same (not exceeding at any one time three), from the library, he being thereby responsible for the due return of the same within a reasonable time, or when required by the clerk. And it shall be the duty of the clerk to keep in a book for that purpose, a record of all books so delivered, which are to be charged against the party receiving the same: and in case the same shall not be so returned, the party receiving the same, shall be responsible for, and forfeit and pay twice the value thereof; as also one dollar per day for each day's detention beyond the limited time.

... that during the session of the court, any judge thereof may take from the law library any book or books he may think proper, he being responsible for the due return thereof.

Presumably the Justices had arranged for the clerk to act for the Librarian of Congress in such matters, but in any event this extension of the right to borrow from a section of the Library represented a timid step, perhaps, indeed, a step taken in the dark, toward the assumption of national functions.

### *The Aggregate Intelligence of the Citizens*

Some day, perhaps some day soon, a qualified student in one of our graduate library schools, will select as the subject of his dissertation the influence of size on library function. It will be at once a challenging and an absorbing object of investigation, for size in terms of range and completeness, not in terms of numbers only, will be the determinant, and to the extent that coverage and inclusiveness are attained the responsibilities which govern function may be measured and assayed. In tracing these factors it may be discovered that the obligations of a

library have a direct ratio to the content and organization of its collection.

In the early eighteenth thirties the Library of Congress was bound for no particular destination. Its acknowledged destiny was the service of Congress, but few, perhaps least of all the Members of Congress themselves, had more than a misty notion of just what that purpose implied. If they looked across the Atlantic toward Westminster (and there is no reason in the world to suppose that they did) they would have learned little from the British experience. The House of Lords Library, founded in 1826, was "still in an embryonic state when the fire of 1834 occurred." Such as they were, the books and papers were rescued. The old library of the House of Commons, established in 1818, was destroyed in that conflagration; a surviving portion, discovered, "after lying neglected and unknown for a generation or two," in the Speaker's Gallery, consisted of a number of historical and political tracts, which had originally formed part "of a curious collection ranging over a period from the reign of Elizabeth to that of George II." When it was reconstituted it concentrated its attention on parliamentary papers and debates, statutes-at-large, and public general acts as well as works on law and history. More recently it has acquired an extraordinary series of postage franks of Members of both Houses of Parliament from 1784 till the introduction of the uniform penny postage in 1840, when the franking privilege was abolished. The House of Lords Library, on the other hand, when it was rebuilt and reinstituted in 1848, elected a larger sphere, excluding novels, to be sure, but accepting general literature, history, topography, law and, perhaps because it was a gift of their confreres on the other side of the Channel, a notable collection of French Memoirs. Even if they had tried, the honorable gentlemen of the Jackson period would



have been put to it to discern their own requirements in the selections made across the sea.

But they received plenty of advice. For example, Samuel Lorenzo Knapp, writing of public characters under the impressive pseudonym of "Ignatius Loyola Robertson," remarked in January 1830, that "Congress had provided but few books for the general reader, until Mr. Jefferson offered his library to them as nucleus for a future national library." As for the members of the Committee, they had, so he reported, supplied some of the deficiencies in that collection, and, being men of "high literary and scientific reputation," had "purchased many rare works of great value to scholars, as also many of high taste and fashion for those who have only time to indulge the eye upon wire-wove or vellum paper, or imperial bindings, or exquisite engravings." Given an annual appropriation of five or six thousand dollars, they could, in twenty years, create "one of the first libraries of the world." With respect to its present stature, "it probably stands fourth in this country; but there are several of the minor class that are . . . nearly equal to it, in point of numbers."

On December 8, 1833, Francis Lieber, the distinguished German-American political scientist and educator, noted in his diary that "Mr. [Richard] Peters, recorder of the Supreme Court of the United States, wishes me to draw up a report to get a large appropriation for the Congressional Library." This request may bear some relation to an anonymous article which appeared in the columns of the *National Intelligencer* for January 8, 1834. It began with an expression of gratification when, "a day or two since," the author had observed "how many valuable works it contained, and with how much judgment the selections had been made." He had been surprised, however, "to learn that

so small a sum as \$5,000 a year was all that was appropriated for its increase." Such a sum was "hardly sufficient to obtain the new works of merit" which were, "generally published," and was "altogether inadequate to purchase the many rare and costly books which should be found in every such Library." His consternation and dismay provoked an exclamation: "Why, Messrs. Editors, even Harvard University expends \$5,000 per annum on its Library, and surely we ought to expect a powerful and wealthy nation to make a more liberal appropriation than a mere college."

What was needed in our country was, he believed, "at least *one* grand and extensive Library," which would "contain all, or nearly all, the works that may be wanted for reference or consultation in every department of human knowledge, and to which the curious and learned may have easy access." It was very evident that if we were ever to have such a library it "must be that established by Congress, for the very obvious reason" that there was not "a single literary institution in our country" that had "funds sufficient for such an undertaking." He, therefore, urged Congress to "look to this matter and appropriate hereafter more than the scanty pittance of \$5,000 for this noble and very important object." In consideration of the "small extent of the Library," which "in some departments" contained almost nothing, "\$20,000 annually would be too little."

He contrasted the "advantages enjoyed by the European Literati for scientific research with those of our own country." It was calculated "that in thirty-one libraries of Germany" there were at least 4,000,000, while probably the "thirty-one largest of our country" did "not contain more than 350,000."

He concluded with a question: "When

will the United States, the boasted land of civilization and knowledge, afford to its students such facilities for the advancement of science and learning as these?"

Now this must have pleased Mr. Peters enormously, but it is doubtful if it had any immediate effect on Congress. There were no large-scale, *en bloc*, acquisitions. Purchases were usually left, so wrote "A Friend to Literature" in the *Intelligencer*, December 5, 1834, "to the Chairman of the Committee," who took "upon himself that duty," and who generally made "the selection at his leisure," which was something he seldom found till after he reached Washington.

The dutiful Mr. Meehan, for his part, continued to dispatch the long lists which the Committee had approved. The British agent for the Library was Obadiah Rich, originally of Cape Cod, lately American Consul at Valencia, in Spain, now established as a book seller in London. Here at home there were many dealers, antiquarian and otherwise. There was, for example, George Templeman, whose establishment was opposite the American Hotel on Washington's Pennsylvania Avenue, and whose stock, in addition to polite literature and public documents included such articles as metallic pens; English, French and American wafers, pounce and pounce boxes and that cherished commodity of bureaucracy, "best red tapes." Another was Jonathan Elliot whom John Quincy Adams called "an Englishman, having no character of his own—penurious and venal—metal to receive any stamp;" but who was said to be in private life "frank, generous, warmhearted, an affectionate father and a kind husband." He is gratefully and best known today as the compiler and publisher of *Debates, Resolutions, and Other Proceedings in Convention, on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution*. His total bills against the

Library were \$45.00 in 1830, \$18.50 in 1831, \$18.37 in 1832, \$15.63 in 1833, and \$61.00 in 1834. At that rate it is easy to understand why he was penurious and why Mr. Meehan was obliged to write so many short orders. Still another beneficiary of Library patronage was the redoubtable Pishey Thompson, whose wife Jane, the poetess, sang gravely of Mount Vernon, Irish emigrants, the funeral of an infant, her father on his eightieth birthday, and other sentimental subjects more lachrymose than lyrical. Pishey's establishment was on Pennsylvania Avenue, between Eleventh and Twelfth Streets, where from time to time he published extensive catalogs of his large assortment of English, classical and foreign books, calling attention to the fact that as a sideline he dealt in such miscellaneous wares as optical and surveying instruments, gloves, gold ornaments, amusing and instructive games, French horns and flageolets. Like the Library to which they looked for a portion of their living, variety was for these merchants both the compensation and the escape from the unsolved problem of day-to-day existence.

And then, in 1836, something almost happened. Former Congressman Richard Henry Wilde was in Florence. He was both statesman and poet. He had been attorney general of Georgia and had served five terms in the National House of Representatives. Now he had retired from public life for two excellent and understandable reasons: in the first place, he had been defeated for reelection; in the second place, he was conscious of a temperamental dissatisfaction with governmental affairs. Accordingly he had journeyed to Tuscany, for the general purpose of indulging his scholarly tastes, which were impeccable, and for the specific object of preparing *The Life and Times of Dante* and *The Italian Lyric Poets*; of which the



unfinished manuscripts are today in the Library of Congress. His life, he had written in his best known lines, was—

... like a summer rose,  
That opens to the morning sky;  
But ere the shades of evening close,  
Is scattered on the ground—to die.

He wished to make the most of it, for himself, for the world of learning and especially for his country. While pursuing his studies he had come across a "rich and curious collection" which was "fullest in those departments in which the Library of Congress" was "deficient, particularly the ancient authors, belles-lettres, literary history, the fine arts, and the standard productions of France and Italy." It was being offered for sale at a price of fifteen thousand pounds sterling, but Mr. Wilde thought it might be acquired "for even something less, perhaps fifty or sixty thousand dollars." He secured a copy of the catalog and sent it post-haste to the Chairman of the Library Committee. The press learned of the opportunity and urged prompt and affirmative action.

The collection had belonged to the late *Graf* Dimitrii Petrovich Buturlin, who had died in Florence, November 7, 1829. A native of Russia, where he was born December 14, 1763, and where the Empress Catherine II had been his godmother, he distinguished himself, early in life, as a discriminating and learned bookman. There was something fabulous about him; endowed with a prodigious memory, it was said that he was familiar with the individual characteristics of every rare or precious edition then known to bibliographers. His first significant collection, begun in 1793, was destroyed when Bonaparte's forces occupied Moscow in 1812. For a time, beginning in 1803, he served as Russian Ambassador to the Vatican. In 1809 he became a director of the *Ermitazh*, the imperial museum and library, and continued in that post until

1817, when poor health compelled him to seek a better climate. He settled in Florence where he spent the rest of his life in assembling a second library even more superb than the first had been. Foreign visitors almost invariably came to see it, for it had acquired a reputation throughout Europe. To every book was affixed a distinctive seal denoting ownership, which bore the Buturlin arms. He had compiled careful notes on every item, and when, on his death, a catalog was prepared, by direction of his heirs, as a "monument to the most enlightened and courageous of bibliophiles," these formed the basis of its compilation.

The catalog, in due course, reached the hands of "The Inspired Declaimer," William Campbell Preston, then chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library. A brilliant lawyer, patron of the arts, intimate of Washington Irving, great-nephew of Patrick Henry, by personal predilection an ardent book collector, possessor of an imposing figure and a rich, mellow, resonant voice, Senator Preston was a life-long champion of libraries, and, by association, was familiar with their requirements. He must have been deeply impressed by, and sympathetic with, the earnest and general interest which the public prints and periodical press manifested in the proposed acquisition of the Buturlin Collection.

In any event, on Thursday, February 18, 1836, Senator Preston submitted a resolution directing the Committee on the Library to inquire into the expediency of purchasing the library of the late Count Bourtoulin [i. e. Buturlin], of Florence. It was considered the following day when Senator Preston remarked that the collection had been examined by a late and distinguished Member of Congress from Georgia, who was a gentleman of great literary attainments, and eminently qualified to judge of its value, and who had

strongly recommended to this country the purchase of it. It was worth much more than the price at which it was offered. For himself, he believed there was no difference of opinion in regard to the great value of it, and that it would be a proper acquisition for the Library of Congress. An opportunity would never perhaps occur again to purchase such an one. It was by mere accident that the opportunity had presented itself. It embraced books in various languages, and many years of the Count's life had been devoted to the collection of this vast library.

Senator Preston was followed by Senator Webster, who had a high opinion himself of the value of the library. It was one of those collections rarely found, and such as he believed did not exist in any library of any of the United States. He understood the expense would not be very great. He thought this was a favorable opportunity to make a valuable addition, if Congress saw fit to make such addition to their Library.

"The resolution was then adopted."

The report, which Senator Preston presented on March 15 was a model of its kind and high credit to him who had so painstakingly prepared it. Opening with a review of the Library's history, it placed particular stress upon Mr. Jefferson's statement: "there is, in fact, no subject to which a member of Congress may not have occasion to refer." Down to the present a total of \$99,950 had been expended on the collection.

Turning to the situation as it then existed the report pointed out that the whole number of volumes in the Library, exclusive of congressional documents, and the laws of the United States, was about 24,000, so that the Library, thus far, had cost about four dollars a volume. There were approximately 6,000 volumes in languages other than English, of which 4,083 were in French, 844 in Latin, 314 in Spanish, 268 in Italian, 281 in Greek

and Latin, 66 in Greek, 29 in Chinese, 13 in Saxon, 12 in German, and 52 in all other languages, ancient and modern. In the additions which the Joint Committee had purchased with the annual appropriations made to the Library, they seemed to have been governed by the practical declaration of its intention, made by Congress in the purchase of Mr. Jefferson's library. They had had to build it up on this most various and miscellaneous foundation, and in the absence of any specific instructions in regard to its character (while they had had a special view to the peculiar wants of Congress) they had made additions to the original stock in all branches of general science and literature. The primary object in instituting the Library, unquestionably was, to afford Members of Congress the means of knowledge necessary for the intelligent discharge of their official business.

It was, however, very difficult to prescribe bounds to the demands which might be made for books in every branch of learning, by the multifarious subjects brought before Congress and its committees. For the second time the report cited Mr. Jefferson on that point. The absolute necessity of Congress had suggested the Library; the utility of extending it beyond actual necessities had early become apparent, it was competent to Congress to extend and adorn it in reference to the dignity and opulence of the Government. As it was manifestly proper that, in the erection of the public buildings, vastness and elegance should be united with utility and comfort, so these qualities might be fitly consulted in whatever was required to be done for the use and accommodation of the Government. The public buildings had been erected at a cost of six millions, and, in many instances, with an elaborate display of architectural ornament, intended to gratify, and, perhaps to improve the public taste.



indulge a just national pride. With the same feelings Congress had not hesitated to make requisitions on the arts of sculpture and painting. This enlightened and liberal regard to the gratification of the tastes and elegant improvement of the country, though made secondary by the nature of the Government to other objects, was not without great importance. It was not a substantive power of Congress to furnish means of knowledge, or models of taste, but, in the necessary and proper arrangement of its establishment, they might, and should be so extended or modified in a way to contribute to both these objects. A Library was necessary: that it should have a certain degree of completeness and elegance, was as proper as that the shafts of the columns around the halls should be polished or surmounted by a capital; and the remark applied with greater force to the Library, not only on account of the superior value of learning, but on account also of the great destitution of the means of knowledge in a country so new as the United States.

At that point the report gave consideration to the fact that in all the public libraries in the United States, including those of schools and colleges, throughout our wide territory, and counting all the duplicates, there were not as many books as were contained in the *Bibliothèque du Roi*, in Paris. It would be a very large calculation to estimate all our libraries at 400,000 volumes, and of these there were not more than 50,000 distinct works. In Paris 1,200,000 books were deposited in public libraries, and in all France 4,200,000. In Germany the reading public was still more liberally provided with books. The whole number of printed volumes of distinct works in the world might be estimated at 600,000; of these there was certainly not more than one-tenth in the United States. Our whole body of literature, if collected in one place, would not

afford the means of investigating one point of science or literature through all or even a considerable portion of what had been written on it. Here, where the foundations of the Government repose upon the aggregate intelligence of the citizens, the assistance afforded by public institutions to the exertions of the intellect, was but one-tenth of that within the reach of the mind of civilized Europe.

In addition to private libraries of much greater extent than the greatest public collections in this country, there were in many of the German towns collections of from one hundred to two hundred and fifty thousand volumes. The number of books in public libraries in Germany was to the population as one to ten, in the United States as one to forty; and this disparity was still more striking if we compared the means of knowledge within the reach of the functionaries of this Government with those which were furnished at the principal capitals of Europe.

London and Paris, of course, were replete with means of knowledge, which would require much time even to enumerate; but it might be stated that there were then in the British Museum, besides its rich and vast collections of art, 180,000 volumes and 60,000 manuscripts.

The Royal Library in Paris had between 400,000 and 500,000; the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg, 300,000; Imperial Library at Vienna, 300,000; the Vatican, 400,000, print and manuscript; at Stuttgart, 120,000; at Copenhagen, 250,000. In short, it would not be going too far to say that there was not a government in Europe, down to its principalities and dukedoms, which had not provided its functionaries with more ample means of useful and elegant knowledge than ours. We did not, however, ascertain our wants merely by a comparison with the abundance of other governments. The experience of Members of Congress had

taught them how often their inquiries were arrested by the want of books. No day elapsed, during the session of Congress, that there was not a call for many volumes which could not be furnished. On a recent occasion the Senate's Committee on the Judiciary, in the investigation of an important question respecting the boundary of a State, had been compelled to borrow the necessary materials from colleges and societies at a distance from the seat of government.

Whether it were proper for Congress to remedy in some degree these defects by the purchase of the library of the late Count Buturlin, at Florence, was the immediate subject of the Committee's consideration; and they were not without difficulty in coming to a satisfactory conclusion. This collection consisted of 25,000 volumes, of which a catalog had been before the Committee, and other information in regard to it had been furnished by an intelligent and public-spirited gentleman, lately of the House of Representatives. The collection had been made under the most favorable possible auspices, during the French War, in Italy, when the monasteries and all the depositories of art and literature were thrown open to the plunder of invading troops, or exposed to the purchase or acquisition of public agents or wealthy private collectors. To this last class Count Buturlin belonged. At the price of a million francs, and with many years of enthusiastic industry, he had made the present collection, which was perhaps richer and more valuable in its kind than any which was now or could be expected to be hereafter on sale in the world. It was especially rich in that species of literature which could be scarcely said to exist in this country, for neither the Library of Congress nor any of the public or private libraries of the United States possessed anything in bibliography beyond an occasional specimen; or of that

noble literature (the whole body of which was contained in this collection) which was the first that came into existence upon the revival of learning, awakening the genius of modern Europe, and inspiring new views of literature, from Chaucer to Milton.

The catalog presented a complete collection of the Italian classics, as designated as such by the Academy Della Crusca; a collection so complete as perhaps to leave nothing to be added. It contained also a very full collection of the ancient, especially the Latin classics, leaving little more to be desired in this department. There were 419 examples of Aldine editions, 368 from the Bodoni press, many hundred volumes printed in the fifteenth century, and many others illustrative of the early achievements of typography and its progress to perfection.

The Buturlin library contained also many valuable manuscripts.

The 25,000 volumes were offered at fifty or sixty thousand dollars, whereas the 24,000 then in the Library had cost one hundred thousand dollars, and it would always happen that books purchased by retail would cost a great deal more than when purchased in large collections. In the collection of this library, the Committee was informed by Mr. Wilde, the founder had expended a million of francs or nearly \$250,000. If it were to be the pleasure of Congress to add this collection to its Library, the whole number of volumes would be about fifty thousand, and of them about one-half would be in our own language, and the others in foreign ancient and modern languages. The purchase would add several thousand duplicates in French, Spanish, Italian, and Latin, which might either be sold without loss or exchanged for works in English.

The number of works in foreign languages would form an insuperable objec-



tion to the purchase if it were intended that the Library would be completed by it; but this the Committee by no means believed to be the intention of Congress, and when the collection should consist of 100,000 or 150,000, 30,000 or 40,000 in foreign languages might not be an undue proportion when it was considered that not a fourth of the literature of the world was in our own language; still, however, this purchase would unquestionably give, for the present, an undue proportion to the literature of the Italian language over that of other foreign languages, especially the French and German. In the German language the Library of Congress contained, at that time, twelve works, and the proposed purchase would make but inconsiderable additions to them; while the number of books in the French language, whose literature was more extensive than that of any other, and the knowledge of which was most extensively diffused, would be left entirely too small.

In Latin, Greek and Italian, the Buturlin library would make the collection complete, and would add very considerably to the French and Spanish. It would make the Library then owned by Congress about 50,000 volumes, of which 20,000 would be in English, 10,000 in French, 20,000 in Greek and Latin, Italian and Spanish, with a few in German. The collection in Greek, Latin, Italian, and Spanish, might be considered complete. Future additions would be necessary in English, French and German. If it were to be the purpose of Congress to extend the Library to 100,000 or 150,000 volumes, the Committee thought the proposed purchase very desirable; and believing that such ought to be and was the intention, the Committee recommended the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That the Joint Library Committee of the two Houses of Congress be, and they are hereby, empowered to contract, on their

part, for the purchase of the library of the late Count Boutourlin, at Florence.

This amazing report contains sentences and phrases so striking as immediately to impress themselves upon the thoughtful reader:

"It is very difficult to prescribe bounds to the demands which may be made for books."

"The absolute necessity of Congress suggested the library."

"It is not a substantive power of Congress to furnish means of knowledge, or models of taste, but in the necessary and proper arrangements of its establishment, they may, and ought to be, so extended or modified as to contribute to both these objects."

"A library is necessary: that it should have a certain degree of completeness and elegance, is as proper as that the shafts of the columns around the halls should be polished or surmounted by a capital."

"Here, where the foundations repose upon the aggregate intelligence of the citizens."

But it is especially remarkable for intrinsic reasons: for the vivid picture of the frailty and poverty of the Library of Congress as it then was, for the presentation of a lamentable lack of literary facilities throughout the United States, for its cordial acceptance of "vastness and elegance . . . united with utility and comfort," for its willingness to "indulge a just national pride," for the first mention of interlibrary loans, for its recognition of the fact that the Buturlin purchase would temporarily destroy the equilibrium of the contents of the Library, for the ingenious assumption that the collections would be complete when they had reached the hundred thousand mark, for its frankness and its courage and its perfect honesty.

When the resolution came up for consideration on the floor of the Senate, June 4, 1836, it was rejected, ayes sixteen, noes seventeen. There was no record vote, but almost right away Henry Clay, "who had voted with the majority, moved a reconsideration . . . which was agreed to

and the resolution was laid on the table." It did not come up again.

It would be interesting to know what had happened, who the men and what their reasons in opposing the measure, who the others and what their claims in championing it, but the records of Congress contain no clues.

It may be that there were those who contended the proposal was too radical or too extravagant, or simply premature. It may be that these Senators, were like the Representatives of 1844, who rejected the Durazzo library because of the preponderance of literature in languages other than English, because it contained "few works which have not been superseded by later authors or editions," and because although "it would be a highly desirable acquisition to a well-endowed literary institution, it is not, in the judgment of the committee, suited to the purposes of Congress." And of course they were perfectly proper, these conservatives, in taking a serious view of the implications and possibilities; they may even have been right. For the library of Dimitriï Petrovich, *Graf* Buturlin was in large part what the French call a *collection de feu*, made up of rare and precious books which in those days only princely connoisseurs could own or really appreciate or completely understand. In those days ancient parchments and variant texts had not the same fundamental importance they have come to possess for scholars everywhere who search the past for explanations of the present. Those great folios with their seals and clasps and bosses might for a moment have been completely out of character in the Library of Congress. They were not suitable for general use, but in declining them a singular opportunity was lost, an opportunity which might have advanced incalculably the intellectual resources of the Nation. But the cautious economies of 1836 merely transferred a burden to future generations. The Li-

brary of Congress acquired a Della Cruscan collection in 1914, at a cost of 6,000 lire, and in 1929, by a special act of Congress, secured 3,000 fifteenth century books (Buturlin had 1,000) for a million and a half dollars! Over and over again experience has made postponement profligate.

### *This Federal Union of Intelligence*

Although, during its first half century, the Library of Congress was forced to forego repeated opportunities, each irrevocable and some unique, to lift itself above the level of mean and meaningless mediocrity, it was not so parochial, so isolated, so laggard as quite to disassociate itself from the rest of the world. If stringent economy was a virtue, so was peace, peace came from understanding, understanding came from the propagation of knowledge among men, and right there was where the Library of Congress came in. Indeed it is the Library's everlasting honor to have been the first office of the Federal Government seriously to participate in the promotion of international intellectual cooperation.

It began on February 5, 1840, when a memorial was presented to the House of Representatives. It announced that at the instance of the author a system of exchanges had been undertaken by "the Governments and literary institutions of the different nations in Europe, by which books, natural productions, and works of art possessed by the one" were "transferred, for an equivalent value" to another which might need them. The system had been urged by the following considerations which formed parts of the memorials he had the honor to present, which had been acted upon by the legislative bodies of his native country, and had been "successful in uniting others in the joint effort to extend and diffuse knowledge beyond the limits to which race, language, or political



boundaries," had "a tendency to confine it."

The memorial went on to say that "all the great establishments founded by Governments to promote science and the arts, museums, collections, galleries, and libraries," possessed, "besides the riches they spread out to view, others which their own abundance" condemned "to actual sterility," these were duplicates, which were necessarily, "but with regret, consigned to dust and oblivion."

There was not a great city of Europe that did not "reckon myriads of such valuable but useless treasures." In 1835, "the library of Munich had 200,000 duplicates; that of Jena, 12,000; that of St. Petersburg, 54,000." The memorialist called attention to the fact that in Vienna there were 30,000 duplicates, including a number of works printed previous to 1520, which "were shut up in warehouses," and the Viennese Brazilian Museum contained in its entomology section 25,000 duplicates. Everywhere, in fact (for no enumeration, however long, would suffice to "exhibit the state of things"), there were to be found "side by side with the collections open to the student and the curiosity of the public, entombed collections, forgotten libraries, unknown museums," whose treasures were "useless to science and lost to the world."

As a consequence, these public institutions had remained "strangers to the great movement of progress" which characterized the present epoch.

"Science," he wrote, "overleaps the boundaries which political systems interpose between nations. All the men consecrated by its worship are brethren. Among them remains no distinction of country, no political divisions; from one end of the world to the other they understand each other's tongue; the discovery of one is the triumph of all; and, thanks to this fraternity of talent, this federal union

of intelligence, science is elevated, and daily extends the empire of civilization. In his travels throughout Europe, your memorialist, if he be permitted to speak of his own efforts, has laid the foundation of a general system of exchange. He has obtained from the learned, from the directors of public establishments, from ministers, and, in some cases, from the sovereigns themselves, the assurance that they are anxious and willing to enter into a well regulated system for the exchange of duplicates."

The project did not remain unproductive; "four years from the date at which it was first presented to the world," nearly two million volumes had been withdrawn "from dust and oblivion," and placed in situations where they had "assumed their real value."

He recited the experience in France, where the system was first proposed but last adopted; six hundred thousand volumes had been "forwarded to a central dépôt, either for internal exchange, or to draw duplicates from foreign countries." There, the progress of the plan had had the effect "not only of calling into activity the buried treasures of former ages," but had had the unforeseen result of leading to "an interchange of modern productions."

At Leipzig, "the great literary mart of the Teutonic Race," the "enlightened publishers" of Saxony had seen that their interests were to be served and promoted. Accordingly they were sending the government five copies of every work which they emitted from the press, "seeing that the trifling adventure, acting as an advertisement," returned in profit a thousand-fold.

At Paris, the publishers were willing to adopt a similar arrangement, provided that in placing five copies of every new work at the disposal of the government, three should be exchanged for the literary or scientific productions of other countries.

Here in the United States the law already required the deposit of two copies of every new work as a condition of copyright. This was "considered a hardship, and but ill observed," because no benefit was "derived to the proprietors from the act." These deposits rotted in dust or were "consumed by the worm." However, "should an additional number be distributed at the cost of the Government, a cost well repaid in a valuable return, to the enlightened countries of the old world, a demand would infallibly arise for American books now unknown, . . . or confined in circulation in the United States alone."

Of all the countries in the world, America would have the most to gain from entering into the plan. "The libraries of Europe, splendid, copious, and rich," had been "the slow accumulation of nearly four centuries," while few in the United States could trace their history over one eighth as long a period. If some of the best-endowed public institutions in the United States possessed works which reflected the present state of science and the "triumphs" of modern literature, they were wanting nevertheless in every field that might be "called the history of art, of science, and of the gradual progress of the human mind, from the time that Faust [Fust] and Guttenburgh [Gutenberg] first called into action that mighty engine, which has established the future liberty of the human race, upon the basis of intelligence universally diffused and every where accessible."

It could be said that the United States, where literary collections were only of modern origin, and where duplicates of books had been only rarely accumulated, would have but little to offer by way of exchange. That, however, was far from being the case. "Wanting printed books, the natural productions of the country, specimens of the animal, the vegetable,

and the mineral kingdoms, more particularly the fossil remains of a more early period of the earth's existence," were "sought and inquired for with avidity in Europe, and would command returns ten-fold of any value that the cost of obtaining them on the spot would amount to." Thus, it was said to be, "notorious, that several skeletons of the mastodon, the mighty brethren" of those which ornamented the collection of the Jardin des Plantes, and made rich the museum of Philadelphia, had been marked and the locality recorded. There was, the memorialist averred, "no museum in Europe that would not consider" such a skeleton cheaply purchased by thousands of duplicate volumes. If the United States had not as yet produced any great number of original literary and scientific works, they were certainly "more prolific in inventions in the useful arts than any other nation," and were "remarkable for improvements in the engines used in agriculture, in manufacture, and in practical mechanics." Models of these would "be in great request in Europe, and would command a rich return."

In the United States where a General Government combined "in union a number of sovereign States, the central administration" might not feel the duty or see it to be within its limited authority, to enter into any system of exchanges for its own account, except so far as the law of copyright or the gift of individuals placed it in its power. But it was, "by the Constitution, the organ of communication with foreign nations," and the seat of government was the "focus" in which was "annually collected the wisdom of the separate States." Therefore it was "to your honorable houses" that the memorialist first directed his appeal for consideration. No sordid motives influenced him in his petitions; from their successful result he could "reap no other benefit than the



consciousness of having performed a duty" which he owed "to his species, and strengthened the bonds which link in friendship the long-separated races of the family of man."

The memorialist did not venture to do more than bring his project, together with the written sanctions which it had already obtained from all that were "highest in station in European Governments, from those of France and England to that of Turkey," before the Congress. He therefore limited his prayer to a request that his memorial be referred to an appropriate committee for consideration in order that it might report such measures as its wisdom might judge expedient in the premises. "Were he to venture any suggestion on the subject, it would be, that the librarian of Congress, under the direction of the joint library committee, be authorized to open correspondence with the executives of the several States of the Union, and with the representatives of foreign powers, for the purpose of obtaining catalogues of such articles as might be available for exchange on the part of the United States, or disposable as a return on the part of foreign nations; and that for the purpose of making a beginning, the copies which" were then "by law directed to be deposited in the Department of State of every copyright book, or engraving, with the printed reports of the two Houses of Congress," be placed at the disposal of the Library Committee for the purpose of exchange. "Convinced that a beginning alone" was necessary, "and that the advantages of his projects" would "develop themselves in a manner to encourage and repay any more extensive action," the memorialist refrained from further suggestion.

The author was no less exciting than his proposal. Born at Paris on November 8, 1796, a descendant of a noble Norman

family, Alexandre Vattemare was said by his son to have had "a much checkered childhood," and upon reaching the age of seventeen to have secured a post as house-surgeon to the hospital of Pity, under the auspices of Dr. Alibert. The following year he was selected to escort to Prussia three hundred convalescent prisoners of war, and on that occasion acquitted himself with so much solicitude for the welfare of his unfortunate charges that upon his arrival in Berlin he was awarded the Iron Cross. During the Hundred Days the Prussian Government proposed that he accept service in the army, and when he declined appointment, he was promptly imprisoned. Upon his release he determined to support himself by his remarkable powers of mimicry and ventriloquism. Calling himself Monsieur Alexandre, he went to England, where once he acted forty parts in a single evening. There he met with gratifying success; James Montgomery, the poet, addressed him—

Stranger, I need not ask thy name;  
I know thee by those wondrous lungs  
Thou art the genuine Son of Fame,  
Talking with all thy Mother's  
tongues.

And from Abbotsford came the tribute of Walter Scott:

Of yore in England, it was not thought  
good  
To carry two visages under one hood:  
What should folks say to *you* who have  
faces such plenty  
That from under one hood you last  
night showed us twenty!  
Stand forth, arch deceiver! and tell us  
in truth  
Are you handsome or ugly, in age or  
in youth?  
Man, woman or child? or a dog or a  
mouse?  
Or are you at once each live thing in  
the house?  
Each live thing, did I ask? each dead  
implement too!  
A workshop in your person—saw,  
chisel and screw.

Above all, are you *one* individual?  
 I know  
 You must be at the least Alexandre  
*and Co.*  
 But I think you're a troop—an assem-  
 blage—a mob,  
 And that I, as the sheriff, must take up  
 the job;  
 And instead of rehearsing your  
 wonders in verse,  
 Must read you the Riot Act, and bid  
 you disperse.

He toured the Continent. The story is told that he once reluctantly consented to perform before Prince Metternich on condition that no one should be admitted to the *salon* after the commencement of the entertainment, but he had hardly begun his exhibition before it was interrupted by an altercation outside the room between a guest determined to gain admittance and a servant bent on a faithful and literal execution of his master's orders. Vattermare stopped and looked reproachfully at his host, and the Prince, shocked by the disregard of his instructions, dispatched other functionaries to quiet the disputants, who returned in dismay to report that they could not discover the disturbers either in the corridor or on the staircase beyond. Suddenly, so the record runs, the company "perceived that the quarrel had taken place in Vattermare's throat, and were highly amused."

In the pursuit of his profession he was enabled to indulge his personal bibliographic and scholarly interests, and in the progress of private research he discovered "many priceless antiquarian relics, the very existence of which was unsuspected by their proprietors." At length he became thoroughly acquainted both with the deficiencies and the excesses of public institutions. He often came upon duplicates of books, regarded as mere rubbish in one place, while in another they would be indispensable for the completion of a collection. "At other times stray volumes of

the same work were met with scattered over different kingdoms; and occasionally works of great importance to the historical collections of one country, preserved in another, where they were matters of little or no interest." For example in the town library of Aix he found fifteen manuscripts relating to the city of Lyons, twelve regarding Paris, five concerning Metz, three of particular importance to Strasburg, and six associated with Geneva, while in the libraries of these cities he discovered manuscripts and unique documents connected with Aix. At Arras he examined fragments of a British historical manuscript, written by the Venerable Bede. In one of the libraries of Paris he saw the first four volumes of a work written in the fifteenth century and generally supposed never to have been finished, but upon reaching Munich he unearthed the fifth and final volume. The second volume, in manuscript, of a history of the Dukes of Burgundy came to light in Lapland, while the first reposed in the library at Lisle. And so it went.

But shocked as he was by these wanton dispersions, he was even more alarmed by the complacent disregard and indifference with which curators contemplated their duplicates, and gradually evolved the idea of national and international exchanges. When it had matured Vattermare, the bookman, no doubt made something of a nuisance of himself. The human race is strangely immune to the enthusiasm of a zealot, particularly when the zealot has a single, all-absorbing, all-else-excluding purpose. His son, Hippolyte who seemed to begrudge his father's passion on the score that he could have left a larger estate by sticking to his more lucrative business as an entertainer, described the experience in these terms:

During the first days of this novel and very difficult career, the artist did not entirely forsake the savant, for it was the artist who appointed



himself the petitioner and taking Vattemare by the hand, he rapped with his magic wand at the door of heads of Bureaux, of Ministers, of Kings and Emperors, and the entrance opened wide. Alexander threw himself into the shade, but the introduction of the savant was an accomplished fact. Vattemare was listened to, first for politeness' sake, then with interest, afterwards with pleasure, and although they strove against it, approbation had to follow as soon as the magnitude and the usefulness of the object were gradually developed. The barrier once broken, the theories considered at first as purely utopian, were accepted as perfectly practicable.

And now, in the winter of 1840, the bearded Monsieur Vattemare, "elector of the Department of the Seine et Oise," had come to America in response to the urgings of the elderly hero Lafayette, General Lewis Cass, American Minister to France, and Churchill Caldom Cambreling, an important American Congressman, who had been traveling in Europe and was soon to be appointed Minister to Russia, who had said to him: "The execution of your plan will produce invaluable benefits to the old and new worlds. Go to America. Go to America." In his portfolio he had brought those endorsements: from His Excellency Alexandre de Mordwinoff, of Saint Petersburg, saying "I have the honor to inform you that his Majesty the Emperor, having been made acquainted with your proposition respecting the establishment of a system of general exchange of duplicates, has perfectly approved your idea;" from Guizot while Minister of Education, now French Ambassador to the Court of St. James: "The considerations adduced by you in support of this plan appear to me to be of a nature such as to entitle them to attention;" from M. Eugène de Monglave, in the name of the Historical Institute of France: "Your idea, sir, is a grand and generous one, which ought to succeed, and which every studious man should encourage by all means in his power;" from the Duc de Broglie, late French Minister of For-

eign Affairs: "The usefulness of labors undertaken by M. Vattemare, with the view of facilitating such exchanges, seems to be unquestionable;" and that group of letters from Americans like Gulian C. Verplanck, Washington Irving, Joel R. Poinsett, and Samuel F. B. Morse. He had presented his petition to the Congress of the United States and it had been referred, as he had hoped it might be, to the Joint Committee on the Library.

Senator Preston brought in a report on June 5. It commended the "industry and ability" which this "subject of the King of the French" had applied to the execution of his project, and reviewed his successful efforts to enlist the support of European governments and learned societies, as witnessed by the "very flattering testimonials" he had secured "from ministers of state, or from distinguished men," whose names were extensively known.

In the opinion of the Committee "the establishment, under the patronage of Government, or of opulent associations, . . . which will effect a more rapid and perfect transmission of ideas from each to every other country," was "a project worthy of the advanced civilization of the age," and even "if but partially carried out," it could not "fail to produce benign results; for, besides the accumulation and diffusion of knowledge," which was the "primary purpose of the plan, the mere effort to effect it" was "calculated to promote a spirit of peace and good will among men."

Moreover, "if the nature and powers of the Federal Government" authorized "the adoption of Mr. Vattemare's project in its widest scope, it would be prompted to do so, as well by the genius of our institutions" which demanded "a general diffusion of intelligence," and was "pre-disposed favorably to every suggestion for that purpose, as by the obvious consideration that the rich accumulations of Europe

in departments of learning," offered a "most profitable exchange."

The Committee was aware of the fact that "the full reciprocation . . . and enjoyment of such advantages" resided "alone within the power of the states." At the same time it believed that the Federal Government might also, "to a limited extent, advantageously enter into the proposed arrangement."

There were certain ways whereby this desideratum might be effected. "The past and passing history of this Government, as imbodyed in its published documents," necessarily produced "the annual publication of many volumes, containing the most authentic and exact account of the progress of national events, and the working of our political machine." Here was a source of communication because "to the intense and enlightened curiosity of the world," were "thus exhibited, at each step of the process, the new and great experiments" we were making; "the accurate knowledge of which by foreign nations" might well "subserve our interest and promote a favorable estimate of our institutions." It was very desirable likewise, that "we should have the means, within the reach of Congress, of as minute a knowledge as authentic records" could "furnish in regard to foreign Governments."

There were "now" in the possession of Congress many hundred volumes of public documents, some of which might well be distributed among friendly governments; and, for a like return, and at a very small expense, permanent provision might be made to supply them in future." Although "in this department of publication" we probably exceeded most foreign nations, "the exchange would be equalised by receiving in return national works of science or art, which the more ample powers of other governments" enabled "them to execute."

In addition to this "not inconsiderable means of profitable exchange," Congress occasionally had "the disposition of duplicate books in the library; and this might be increased by an amendment of the copyright laws, directing three copies of every publication under a maximum value, in the Congressional library."

Therefore "for the purpose of carrying out these views," the Committee offered the following resolutions and a bill:

1st. *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That the librarian, under the supervision of the Committee on the Library, be authorized to exchange such duplicates as may be in the library, for other books or works.

2d. That he be authorized, in the same way, to exchange documents.

3d. That hereafter — additional copies of each volume of documents printed by order of either House be printed and bound, for the purpose of exchange in foreign countries.

An identical report was made to the House on the following day (June 6, 1840), but no action was immediately taken. Vattermare became alarmed lest the crowded calendar and the approaching adjournment of Congress would combine to cause an indefinite delay. On June 11, he addressed an appeal to "M. Le Colonel Benton, Sénateur de Missouri," urging that something be done and explaining that "the Senate would require but a very few minutes to arrive at a result." The Joint Resolution passed the House on July 10 and on July 17 it cleared the Senate. Presidential approval came three days later, with the number of additional copies of documents "for the purpose of exchange in foreign countries" fixed at fifty. The diseur turned documentarian, the man who was part Bergen and part bibliographer had attained an important object of his mission. When Vattermare died at Paris, April 7, 1864, the Library had discarded his system but retained the principle. Other and more



effective procedures for the achievement of the goal had been developed and adopted. But the purpose and the Library's part in it have persisted, expanded and grown deeply rooted. Somewhere, in the Champs Elysées, M. Alexandre still throws his voice: "By this fraternity of talent, this federal union of intelligence, science is elevated and daily extends the empire of civilization."

### *Whims of Congresses and Congressmen*

Between 1840 and the midsummer of 1846, Martin Van Buren, William Henry Harrison, John Tyler and James K. Polk were successively tenants of the imposing residence at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue; Mr. Emerson published a volume of *Essays*; Louis-Napoléon made a miscalculation and found himself the "Prisoner of Ham;" down in Danielsville, Georgia, Crawford W. Long experimented with the use of sulphuric ether; Victoria of England became the bride of Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha; to everyone's relief the Seminole War ended; Texas joined the union of states; the planet Neptune was discovered; and the Mexican War got off to a good start with the Battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma.

In the Library of Congress there was an enlargement of the staff with the appointment of Mr. Meehan's one-handed son to the post of second assistant, a new "hydrolic" cement floor was laid, and a visiting novelist, Charles Dickens, found the place "pleasant and commodious" while the view from the balcony afforded "a beautiful prospect of the adjacent country."

Then, on April 29, 1846, Stephen A. Douglas, "the Little Giant," apparently as an afterthought, introduced an amendment which subsequently became a law, providing that thereafter the Library of Congress should be the beneficiary of one copy of every article registered for copy-

right. There was in the usage of other nations ample precedent for establishing a requirement whereby a national library or libraries should receive additions by copyright deposit. In Britain the law had, for a time, called for eleven copies; a number which had recently been reduced to five. In France two copies, one for the Bibliothèque Nationale and one for the Library of the Ministry of the Interior, were involved. Spain sent one copy to the National Library and the other to the library of the province in which the work was published. Portugal demanded two copies, while in the German states some held out for two, others for three. The Swiss forwarded two copies of original editions and one copy of each reprint to the public library of Geneva; in Denmark the Royal Library at Copenhagen got two copies; in Sweden the Royal Library in Stockholm and the universities of Lund and Uppsala were each the depository of single copies. The Russian laws were satisfied by placing two copies in the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg.

In the United States there had been a system or systems of copyrights for many years. Even before the Delegates to the Federal Convention met in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787, the rights of authors had been protected by the separate States, and when the Constitution emerged, Section 8 of Article I declared that "The Congress shall have Power . . . To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries . . ." The first Federal law of Copyright was enacted in 1790, and by its terms the Department of State was charged with the receipt of one copy of each publication entered in the offices of the district courts throughout the United States. Unfortunately there was no provision for enforcing penalties against delinquent authors

or publishers, and as these deposits when made came through "the circuitous and uncertain medium of court officers in distant places, while no provision was made for forming the books into a copyright library, or rendering them in the least degree available to public inspection, the system was an entire failure so far as concerns the securing of any considerable collection of American copyright books." The clerks of the district courts in some publishing centers never bothered to send a single book to Washington. Actually it was to take the Department of State seventy-five years to accumulate ten thousand volumes.

The act of August 10, 1846, was "the first attempt to recognize by law the importance of building up at the seat of Government a complete representation of American literature." It contemplated the deposit of three copies, one in the library of the projected Smithsonian Institution, one in the Library of Congress, and one in the Department of State. The first and second copies were intended for *use*; the third for purposes of record. But the law was ineffective for reasons which should have been removed simply because they were familiar. It failed because it contained no redress against those who declined or ignored compliance. There were publishers, of course, who most meticulously observed the spirit and the letter; others wholly neglected them. Naturally the two libraries received quantities of material, Sunday school texts, juveniles, indifferent prints, engravings, and other classes of current production least likely to serve the immediate purpose of research, while more substantial literature managed to escape the tattered dragnet. The Smithsonian Jewett and the Congressional Meehan felt a little misled, aggrieved and abused, and when the law was repealed in 1859 there were sentimental but dry-eyed regrets. What

the law had needed was a good denture; none would be fashioned for another decade.

Meanwhile there they were, those unwelcome intruders, and there were those quantities of documents bound for Vattermare, and there were those long lists to dispatch to agents, and there were those insistent demands for service. Mr. Meehan, his two assistants and the messenger were never idle. Into a neat ledger was carefully copied, from salutation to complimentary close, every letter which left the Library. Gifts had to be acknowledged, accounts kept, the collection processed, overdue loans recalled, and, when Congress was not in session, irregular but frequent reports made to the chairman of the Joint Committee. These last sometimes contained a health note—"The cholera is occasionally showing itself among us; the usual bilious disorders of the season are of extremely rare occurrence."—"We have had some severe cases of dysentery, but few of them proved fatal."—"I was very glad to learn that you managed to take a little recreation at Old Point Comfort, and hope that yourself and family have derived lasting benefit from your visit to that excellent watering place."

At the beginning of 1850, when the Smithsonian Institution published *Notices of Public Libraries in the United States of America* it seemed to have been forgotten that in the purchase of the Jefferson collection the country had acquired a "substratum" for a National Library. It had a Library, of course, then grown to "about 50,000 volumes, a few Manuscripts, a series of medals designed by Denon and executed by order of the French government, commemorative of events during the reign of Napoleon; some valuable maps and charts, and busts of several of the Presidents, with a few paintings of interest." The yearly average increase was



about 1,800 volumes. The collections were housed in three rooms in the Capitol, "only one of which was originally designed for the purpose." Catalogs had been published as follows: "In 1802 (10 pp. 8vo.) supplement, 1803 (3 pp.) and 1808 (41 pp.) in 1812 (101 pp. 8vo.) in 1815 (170 pp. 4to., containing Jefferson's library;) supplement, 1820 (28 pp.) and in 1830 and '31 (362 pp. 8vo.)" The last catalog had been printed in 1840 (747 pp. 8vo.) with additions recorded in annual supplements. A new catalog was then in press.

The Library was "open every day during the sessions of Congress," and during a recess, for six hours on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday of each week. "Members of Congress, the President and Vice President of the United States, Heads of Departments, Judges of the Supreme Court, Secretary of the Senate, Clerk of the House, agents of the Library Committee, and Foreign Ministers," were "entitled to the use of the library," and were "allowed to take out books." The number of books annually issued on loan was "not known," nor could "the number of persons consulting the library be stated," but both were "very great during the sessions of Congress." Charles C. Jewett, author of the *Notices*, considered the Library of Congress "one of very great value" and "worthy of a minute and accurate catalogue." Without such an apparatus "it would be comparatively useless . . . were it not for the catalogue of its contents written upon the memory of the librarians." In such a record as he proposed "every book, pamphlet, map, handbill, speech, and important article in a review or magazine, should be entered carefully and accurately under the name of its author, and alphabetical and analytical indexes of subjects should be made." Moreover, this "catalogue should be a model performance." At the same

time he recognized the fact that "such an one should not, of course, be required from the present force employed in the library," which was "not sufficient for the regular work of the establishment." Indeed, "the making of a catalogue should be a separate affair."

But at that moment a closer approach to a National Library was forming at the Smithsonian, then rapidly becoming "a centre of bibliographical knowledge," in the hope that one day it might be "worthy of the United States of America," and thereby "release us from a provincial dependence in literary matters upon the libraries of Europe." There the Institution's 6,000 books were accessible to all who wished "to use them in the room."

Toward the close of 1851, Washington was "still one of the best places for study in America." Wrote Charles Hale in the second number of *To-Day*, *A Boston Literary Journal*:

The Copy-right Library has 10,000 or more late American publications. The Smithsonian Library has as many books, including Mr. Marsh's valuable collections of Scandinavian literature. The Patent office Library, the Engineer's Library, and the War and [National] Institute Libraries comprise nearly 30,000 scientific books. . . . The House's Library is 12,000 volumes of law books and documents. And among private Libraries we may name Col. Force's invaluable collection on American History and early printing—which in these departments has books no where else in the country.

As for the Library of Congress, it was, Mr. Hale begrudgingly conceded, "a valuable collection of miscellaneous and law books," but "valuable as it was, there were circumstances attending its collection" which diminished his regard. For example,

It was collected by different committees,—of course without any continued system, and it exhibited quite curiously the whims of Congresses and Congressmen.

For instance, there was always a demand for Heraldry books. In compliance with this the

Committees kept it up to the time, in all the English publications of that sort. Our Members from the West thronged that alcove on their first arrival, and many an "honorable gentleman" could not rest till the chairman of the Library Committee had translated his Latin family motto for him.

There had to be assortments of showy picture books for the dangles who made the Library room their flirting place in the session . . .

Any private person, with the \$250,000 spent for this Library, would have had a collection of four times its value. But "Uncle Sam" never gets his money's worth. And yet this was quite too good to lose.

And yet it had been lost.

### *Flues, Furnaces and Futility*

It was four o'clock on the afternoon of Tuesday, December 23, 1851. The Librarian was about to close the Library of Congress for the day. It would soon be dark.

He glanced about, "everything . . . appearing to be perfectly safe as usual." The books were in their places within the twelve arched alcoves, "ornamented with fluted pilasters, copied from the pillars in the celebrated Octagon Tower at Athens." Over the mantel at the south end of the room was the fine portrait of Columbus, believed to have been painted "by the same hand which painted the celebrated likeness of that great man, now in the palace of the Escorial in Spain." It had been presented by George G. Barrell, while serving as our Consul at Malaga. Perhaps William Elliot was right; perhaps it was "in rather too elevated a position to gratify the spectator." Someday something should be done about it. In other parts of the room, on the walls and between the alcoves hung Gilbert Stuart's portraits of the first three Presidents, together with portraits of Peyton Randolph, John Hancock, John Tyler, Bolivar, Cortes, Americus Vesputius, the two Barons, deKalb and von Steuben, and other famous men, American and foreign.

On the right of the door leading onto the balcony was Ceracchi's admirable bust of Mr. Jefferson, "elevated on the frustum of a fluted black marble column, based upon a circular pedestal," which was "ornamented at the top by a continued series of cherubs' heads, under a broad band encircling the pedestal," on which were "sculptured the signs of the zodiac." The pedestal had been presented to Mr. Jefferson in France, and bore a Latin inscription which was translated for the benefit of Capitol sightseers: "To the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, under whose watchful care the liberties of North America were finally achieved, and under whose tutelage the name of Thomas Jefferson will descend forever blessed to posterity." (At Monticello, Mr. Jefferson's modesty had induced him to turn the inscription toward the wall, but here no such compulsions were felt.) "This bust was regarded by Mr. Jefferson's family as presenting the most perfect likeness of him of any extant."

Opposite it was David's head of "the generous and brave Lafayette." It, too, was in marble, "of colossal and bold proportions," and it had been "designed for an elevated position," which it did not hold. As a likeness it was considered admirable. On one side of the base block was inscribed an extract from his speech in the House of Representatives, December 10, 1824, and on the other his last words in answer to the President's farewell in September 1825.

Over the cornice of the alcoves, upon the blocking of the gallery, were several plaster busts; one of General Jackson, another of General Moultrie. They seemed familiar and eminently correct.

The Brussels carpet was clean; the large engravings were out of sight, carefully arranged in the drawers of the tables which furnished the middle portion of the long room. The furnace provided a pleasant



warmth. The Librarian locked the door behind him, and, passing through the portico and down the steps, hurried to his home a block or two away. Christmas would come in two days. He probably looked forward to a little rest.

But the following morning was for him one of strenuous and tragic activity, and at the earliest possible moment he sat down to write a letter to James Alfred Pearce, chairman of the Joint Library Committee of Congress:

. . . It is my melancholy duty to inform you that a fire originated in the principal room of the Library of Congress, this morning, about half past seven o'clock, and that nearly everything in the room was destroyed before the flames were subdued.

The guard who was on duty at the time, told me that when he discovered the fire, having broken open the door for the purpose, it might have been extinguished by a few buckets of water, which unfortunately were not near at hand; but, that it spread in a few minutes so extensively as to be entirely beyond the control of the few persons then in the building with him. The fire soon extended to the roof, which was entirely destroyed, and left the late, beautiful room, with its invaluable contents, a smouldering mass of ruins.

I believe that all the books and other property, in the Committee room, and in the large room adjoining it, are safe and uninjured.

How the fire originated is quite a mystery, as no fire or lights have been used in any of the rooms of the Library for several years. Some have conjectured that the fire was communicated to the woodwork adjacent to the flue used for warming the room; whilst others believe that it was the work of an incendiary. The latter is my own opinion. A searching investigation will be ordered by Congress, I presume; and I trust that the true cause of the most melancholy event will then be ascertained.

What had happened was this. At a quarter before eight on the morning of December 24, smoke, or flame, or both, were observed by a passer-by who notified the Capitol police. John W. Jones, of the police force, assisted by a certain Mr. Hollohan forced open the main door of the Library, and discovered a large table at

the north end of the room afire, as well as a part of the shelving and books in the alcoves on the right. From the statement of Mr. Jones it appeared that when he first saw the blaze he and Mr. Hollohan hastened downstairs to get water and to summon assistance. The opening of the door produced a draft which "lent such vigor to the flames that by the time they returned the whole room was irrecoverably won to the power of the destroying element."

The alarm was given by shouts of "fire" and the ringing of alarm bells. Firemen hurried to the Capitol with their apparatus; and despite the fact that many of them had been up all night "in trying to extinguish a fire at Mr. Baker's Hotel, they worked their engines with great vigor and commendable perseverance." First to arrive was the Columbia Fire Company, followed shortly by the Anacostia. The *National Intelligencer* reported that "the hose [of the Columbia] being in a frozen condition, . . . had to be taken to the new gas factory on the canal to be thawed;" but *The Washington News*, on the authority of the President of that Company dismissed the canard as "entirely erroneous" insisting that "the hose never left the Capitol and was soon put in working order and rendered unfreezable, by means of whiskey." To the exertions of these public servants the salvation of the Capitol was due, for had the large dome caught fire, the building could hardly have escaped total destruction. By "cutting down with their axes the burning roof and dome, the conflagration was confined to the Congress Library." Assisting these "professionals" were the United States Marines from the Navy Yard and "numerous citizens who rendered prompt and willing" help "on a day of remarkable inclemency." Fire departments in Baltimore and Alexandria were getting ready to dash for Washington when they received a telegraphic an-

nouncement that the flames had been brought under control.

Thomas U. Walter, Architect of the Capitol, explained the cause. Flues from some of the committee rooms passed under the floor of the Library, and close to the partition wall where they entered, an aperture was found quite large enough to admit particles of such light and combustible materials as are used in kindling fires. The fires in these rooms were made up at half-past six o'clock, and the chimney had taken fire. The alcoves of the Library were formed of timbers filled with "brick-nogging;" and the horizontal pieces were let into the walls for the purpose of strengthening the structure, thus affording the means of communicating the fire to the vertical scantling, one of which was placed against the wall in each partition. Mr. Walter declared that "the timbers were too far above the fire place to be set on fire in any other way than by the burning of the chimney, and such an event could not have occurred at any time without communicating fire to the Library." He concluded with a clear conscience: "No human forethought or vigilance could, under the circumstances, have prevented the catastrophe."

Mr. Meehan spent Christmas Day penning identical letters to the Honorable William R. King, President of the Senate of the United States, and the Honorable Lynn Boyd, Speaker of the House of Representatives, U. S. Congress.

He had not, he wrote, "been able to ascertain the precise number of the books that were destroyed," but estimated about thirty-five thousand. It was, however, truly gratifying to have it in his power to add, "that about twenty thousand volumes of books that were in the Law Room, and in the two rooms adjoining the Saloon of the Library," were safe. "Many of these books belonged to the library of the late President Jefferson" and constituted the

several chapters in the catalog of the Library, "agreeably to Mr. Jefferson's classification, under the following heads: Ancient History; American History; Ecclesiastical History, Chemistry; Mineralogy & Conchology; Moral Philosophy; Law of Nature and Nations; Religion; the five chapters composing the Law Department of the Library; Politics (including the Science of Legislation, Political Economy, Commerce, Banking, Statistics, etc.); part of the chapter on Architecture; and the entire chapters on Music; Dialogue and Epistolary; Logic, Rhetoric, and Orations; and the Theory of Criticism."

The letter ended with a request for an investigation. It was read to the House a few minutes after noon on Friday, December 26 and Representative Richard Henry Stanton, of Kentucky, chairman of the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, arose to ask the unanimous consent of the House to introduce a Joint Resolution "in reference to the subject referred to in the communication just read." There were cries of "Read it. Read it."

The Resolution was then read the first and second time, as follows:

Joint Resolution authorizing an inquiry into the origin of the late fire, by which the National Library was destroyed.

*Resolved*, That the Joint Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds be instructed to inquire into the origin of the fire by which the National Library was consumed, on the 24th instant, and whether the same occurred from the negligence of any officer of Government, or person in the employment of either or both Houses of Congress, or from the defective construction of the furnaces or flues, or was the act of an incendiary; and also the extent of injury to the building, and the best mode of reconstructing the Library Room, so as to afford perfect security in the future against the like disaster, and report the facts to the House. The said committee shall have power to send for and examine, on oath, such persons as may have information touching the premises.

The debate had begun and several



amendments had been offered before Mr. Stanton corrected himself. "It has been suggested to me," he said, "that in the resolution offered to the House, the Library has been miscalled, and that instead of being called the National Library, it should be called the Congressional Library, or the Library of Congress." He supposed that "by the unanimous consent of the House" that alteration could be made. It was, and the resolution was shortly thereafter, read a third time and passed.

On the same day Mr. Meehan wrote to William Easby, Commissioner of Public Buildings, in response to questions already raised:

... In reply to your inquiries I would respectfully state, that fires in the Library were discontinued some time ago; and that the several rooms in the Library have been warmed by flues from furnaces not in my charge.

No lights of any kind have been used in the Library since it was placed in my care. During the sessions of Congress the Library has been kept open as long as either House has been in session during daylight. When the sittings have been continued until candle-light; the Library has always been closed as no lights were allowed to be used in it.

On the day preceding the fire the Library was closed about 4 o'clock, p. m. Everything in it appearing to be perfectly safe as usual.

Both of the ectraces [i. e. entrances] to the Library were found to be securely locked by Mr. Jones, the watchman who believed it to be on fire, at about half past seven o'clock, on the morning of the 24th instant. He informed me that he was obliged to force an entrance into the room, by driving out one of the panels in the door.

Sympathy and sorrow were general. On December 29, Mr. Meehan returned thanks to Eli French, of 135 Nassau Street, New York, for his "kind offer to supply the Library of Congress with a choise [sic] copy of Audubon's splendid 'Birds of America,' to replace the copy you supposed to have been destroyed by the recent disastrous fire in the Library." It afforded Mr. Meehan great pleasure to be able to report that the Library's copy

"was saved and uninjured," because "it happened very fortunately, to be placed in the Library Committee room, which the fire did not reach." As a matter of interest he noted: "Our copy is one of the very best; it having been selected for us by Mr. Audubon and bound in the most substantial manner for us, under his own care and supervision."

Mistress Anne Royall, on the other hand, nursed her ancient grudge. In *The Huntress* for January 3, 1852, she scoffed:

He [Mr. Meehan] asks for a "searching investigation." He well knows that searching will be in vain—books lost it is said, and books mutilated, with leaves cut out which contained facts criminalizing people of high standing, what would the people gain by an investigation, when the whole mass or nearly so, are in ashes. He took good care not to call for an investigation previous to the fire. He has been Librarian ever since Gen. Jackson first came into the Presidency, upwards of twenty-two years, much too long for a man like him to be entrusted with a place of such importance. In fact, he ought never to have had the appointment—a low vulgar man, elevated from poverty to affluence, one of Dr. Ely's christian party in politics, he had neither the manners nor the judgment suitable for a place visited by hundreds of the first people daily. He came near being kicked one day [a personal reminiscence?] for insulting a lady; so it is with the vulgar when raised above their station.

He knew how to take care of his own, however, one of his boys scratched his finger one day, and the poor boy being lamed for life, a member of Congress had him placed in the Library at \$500 per annum—the second year a few hundred dollars more was added to the lame boy, and so on till it reached \$1800. How much higher it has risen since we do not know. These humane members have found their reward in the destruction of the Library—alas for such management! All the valuable books sent to us by foreign friends of incalculable value gone. Who can have patience with such conduct? whether willful [sic] or carelessly done, it is unpardonable all round, Congress or the Architect ought to have had a regular examination of these flues and furnaces, previous to the meeting of every Congress. But he is a Democrat and a blueskin besides.

But the Democrat and blueskin survived the triple-charge of malfeasance, negligence and nepotism. Both Mr. Meehan and Mr. Walter were absolved of personal responsibility for the disaster, and Congress, with magnificent wisdom, confidence and promptitude set about to repair, restore, and replace. Witness the following legislation:

By the act of January 13, 1852, five thousand dollars was appropriated to be expended under the direction of the Commissioner of Public Buildings in discharging the expenses incurred "in the extinguishment of the late fire in the Library room, the removal of the rubbish, and the preservation of such books and other articles as may have been saved, and the construction of a tin roof for the preservation and protection of that portion of the building now exposed." A second section provided ten thousand dollars "for the purchase of books for the Library of Congress, to be expended under the direction of the Joint Committee on the Library."

By an act of January 23, 1852, twelve hundred dollars was appropriated "to be expended under the direction of the Commissioner of Public Buildings, for the purpose of fitting up the document room and a portion of the adjoining passage to receive temporarily a portion of the books of the Congressional Library."

By an act of March 19, 1852, seventy-two thousand five hundred dollars was appropriated for the "repair of the Congressional Library room . . . according to the plan described in the report and drawings which were submitted by the architect to the Secretary of the Interior, and approved by the Committee on Public Buildings of the Senate: *Provided, however,* That the work shall be executed under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, and be subject to such modification of the details as may be consistent with the general arrangements of the plan, and neces-

sary and proper in the opinion of the President of the United States."

By an act of August 31, 1852, seventy-five thousand dollars was appropriated for "purchase of books for said library, and for contingent expenses thereof, and for purchase of furniture for same."

Finally, by an act approved August 31, 1852, the Joint Committee on the Library was authorized "to sell any works in the library which were rendered imperfect by the late fire, and appropriate the proceeds of said sale to the purchase of other books."

Meanwhile Mr. Meehan was busier than he had ever been in his busy life. By January 7 he had completed a report to Senator Pearce, in which he fixed the loss at approximately 35,000 volumes, "including nearly all our collection of Parliamentary Debates, and all the Parliamentary Reports and Papers; a complete set of Congressional Reports, from the adoption of the Constitution; the Journals and Reports of the New York Legislature, from 1820 to 1848; nearly all that we had received from Mr. Vatte-mare, on the principle of international exchange, including the extensive collection of French Medals; a collection of the Napoleon Medals, that were presented to Congress by Mr. G. W. Erving, Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States to Spain, in the year 1821; a small collection of American Medals; nearly all our extensive collection of Maps; two portraits of Columbus; Portraits of Mr. Hanson, President of Congress in the year 1782, of Baron DeKalb, of Bolivar, and of Cortes; busts, in marble, of Thomas Jefferson, J. Q. Adams, and General Lafayette; busts in plaster of Chief Justice Marshall, L. Woodbury, Gov. Moultrie, Gen. Jackson, and F. Hassler, the volumes of the Exploring Expedition, that were deposited in the Library; many of the documents that were in charge of the Committee for International Exchanges;



and the furniture of the Library that was in the principal Saloon."

As for loans or deposits: "A bust, in bronze, of Gen. Washington, and a bust in bronze, of Apollo; a bust in marble of Gen. Taylor; two busts in plaster; and portraits of Presidents Washington, Adams, and Jefferson, by Stuart; a portrait of President J. Q. Adams by J. Cranch; and a portrait of Baron Steuben by Pyne; all belonging to private individuals, were in the Library at the time of the fire, and were all destroyed."

The books which were destroyed belonged to the following chapters in Mr. Jefferson's classification: "Chapter 2, Modern History, Southern and Northern Europe, Turkey, Asia, and Africa.—Chapter 3, Modern History continued, England, Scotland, and Ireland.—Chapter 6, Natural Philosophy.—Chapter 7, Agriculture.—Chapter 9, Surgery.—Chapter 10, Medicine.—Chapter 12, Natural History, Animals.—Chapter 13, Natural History, Botany.—Chapter 15, Occupations of Man, Technical Arts.—Chapter 25, Mathematics, Pure, Arithmetic.—Chapter 26, Mathematics, Pure, Geometry.—Chapter 27, Physico-Mathematics; Mechanical Statics, Dynamics, Pneumatics, Phonics, Optics.—Chapter 28, Astronomy.—Chapter 29, Geography; General, Europe, Asia, Africa, and America.—Chapter 30, Architecture . . . the 4to. and larger volumes . . . 8vo. and smaller volumes were in the room adjoining the Saloon, and were saved.—Chapter 31, Fine Arts; Gardening, Painting, Sculpture, &c.—Chapter 33, Poetry; Epic.—Chapter 34, Romance; Tales, Fables, Fiction, &c.—Chapter 35, Poetry; Pastorals, Odes, Elegies, &c.—Chapter 36, Poetry; Didactic.—Chapter 37, Tragedy.—Chapter 38, Comedy.—Chapter 42, Criticism; Bibliography.—Chapter 43, Criticism; Languages.—Chapter 44, Polygraphical.—Chapter 45, Newspapers."

Among the chapters which had been spared, Mr. Meehan enumerated: "Chapter 1, Ancient History.—Chapter 4, American History.—Chapter 5, Ecclesiastical History.—Chapter 8, Chemistry.—Chapter 11, Anatomy.—Chapter 14, Mineralogy and Conchology.—Chapter 16, Ethics; section 1, Moral Philosophy; section 2, Law of Nature and Nations.—Chapter 17, Religion.—Chapter 18, Common Law; Criminal Law, and Trials; Military Law, and Courts Martial.—Chapter 19, Common Law Reports, British and American.—Chapter 20, Equity; Treatises and Reports.—Chapter 21, Ecclesiastical Law; Treatises and Reports.—Chapter 22, Merchant and Maritime Law; Treatises and Reports.—Chapter 23, section 1, Civil Law, Codes, &c.; section 2, British and American Statutes.—Chapter 24, Politics.—Chapter 30, Architecture; the 8vo. and smaller volumes saved.—Chapter 32, Music.—Chapter 39, Dialogue and Epistolary.—Chapter 40, Logic, Rhetoric, and Orations.—Chapter 41, Criticism, Theory."

In addition, a number of works, classified among the chapters which generally had been destroyed, were saved because for want of shelf-space in the main Library they "had been placed in the Committee room, and in the room adjoining, to which the fire did not extend." Among these Mr. Meehan noted particularly Petitot's *Memoires de France* (131 volumes), *Annual Register* (9 volumes), *L'Esprit des Journaux Francais et Étrangers* (115 volumes), *Harper's Family Library* (155 volumes), *Valpy's Delphin Classics* (160 volumes), *Bell's Weekly Messenger* (12 volumes), *London Times, 1837 to 1849* (50 volumes), *Boston Atlas, 1843 to 1849* (13 volumes), and the *Richmond Inquirer*. Finally, "many books belonging to the various chapters were saved by being in the hands of persons entitled to the full

privileges of the Library, and in the hands of the bookbinder."

By January 9 things had progressed to a point where Mr. Meehan could inform a correspondent: "The books that were injured by the late fire in the Library of Congress are in the hands of the binder who binds the books for the Library; and, so far as they may be worthy of rebinding, they will be repaired and rebound by him."

On the fifteenth of that month he wrote to the sons of Obadiah Rich, in London, informing them that "the late calamitous destruction" had "left us destitute of dictionaries." However, "at a recent meeting of the Joint Committee on the Library it was decided to commence operations, without delay, for restoring the Library to its great usefulness, and for extending it in every department of literature." As an earnest of that intention he was enclosing a want-list which the Committee had "determined to have purchased in Europe, immediately." He begged the agents "to collect as many of them as you can, already bound in good calf or Russia or Morocco, all plain, but neat and forward a box of them, at least, with all possible despatch." He promised to "send . . . another order by the next steamer." He warned them: "You have great competition here, from our book sellers, and we expect that you will maintain in our approaching dealings, the superiority your house has maintained, for promptness, accuracy, cheapness, and fidelity." He was, he told them, most anxious to obtain "a complete set of the Journals of the Lords and Commons, with their Reports and other Documents." In that connection he asked: "Would it not be well to make inquiry of some of the principal officers of Parliament?"

He wrote them again on the twenty-seventh saying that the list had been considerably modified; he was forwarding a

corrected version. Time was of the essence. "You will please not to send us any book that is *not* bound or half-bound in leather. We have no time now to attend to getting any binding done here." He was eager to secure "some booksellers Catalogues, and the various books on bibliography embraced in the list now before you."

At about the same period, he made inquiries concerning the contents of Zachariah Poulson's private library which was about to be placed on sale in Philadelphia; endeavored to secure a substitute file of the *National Intelligencer*; wrote to the secretaries of state of the several States for documents; informed Senator Hannibal Hamlin, of Maine, that Mr. Jefferson's copy of "N. Chipman's *Sketches of the Principles of Government*" had been saved from the fire, and that he was "unable to say whether the Committee would now purchase a copy of any other edition;" instructed the Rich brothers "to fill the order as soon as it may be practicable—but not to send us any book 'in boards,' or 'in cloth,'" adding, "If you have not time to get them bound especially for us by your own binder who does our work, try to get them out of some of the stores well and plainly bound . . . and have our 'eagle' and 'Library of Congress' placed on them in the usual manner by your binder;" reported to the Baron Von Gerolt, Minister Resident of Prussia, in the U. S. A., that the "first five volumes of the beautiful work entitled 'Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand,' presented through your kindness to the Library of Congress, by your Government, was saved, uninjured, from the dreadful fire;" notified the artist, James Reid Lambdin, of Philadelphia, that his portrait "of the Hon. John Tyler, late President of the United States" had been burned; tried to secure another copy of Hogarth's works from his original engravings, in large folio, the plates re-



touched by Heath, along with a facsimile of the Shakespeare folio of 1622, the *editio princeps* of Aristotle, 1495, and a good set of the five-volume Hakluyt.

The chairman of the Library Committee, Senator Pearce, was ill, but Mr. Meehan kept him fully informed of progress as is evident from the following extracts from his reports:

March 15, 1852. "We are in the new [temporary] Library Room that was made from the entry. It is fitted up in good style, & has given great satisfaction to all who have visited us in it."

April 2, 1852. "I feel afraid that we shall not be able to enter the new [permanent] Library Room during the present session of Congress, as no advertisement for proposals to furnish the iron work of the room has yet appeared in the newspapers."

April 3, 1852: "Our old set of 'Parliamentary Papers, Reports,' etc., so far as it was *perfect* extended so far back only as the year 1829. The set now offered for sale, extends back to 1815. The binding *alone* of ours, in England, cost us *eight* shillings per volume. The cost of the set named in Rich's letter, is only *three shillings* or *three shillings and six pence*, per volume, in the same style of binding as ours."

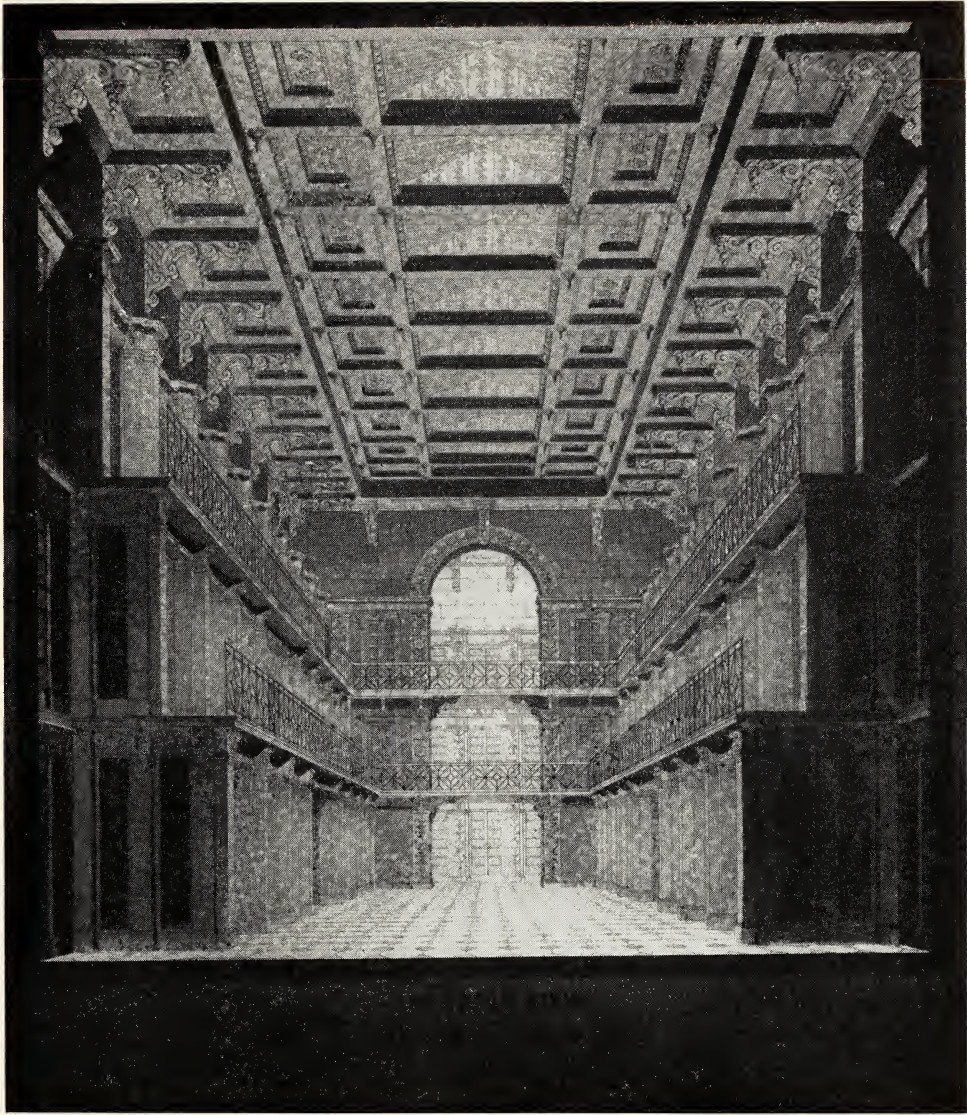
April 9, 1852. "Mr. Walter made a commencement on the Library Room, last Wednesday. . . . He thinks he will have the room ready for use in about three months. . . . I have just rec'd a large invoice of books from Messrs. Rich. I presume the books will reach us on Monday next, from New York."

Gifts and offers poured in. Giuseppe Fagnani, of New York, submitted a portrait of Henry Clay which was considered "a good likeness of the great man." Henry Stevens, of Vermont, presented a *New Survey of the Globe*, 1729. The Royal Geographical Society, London, donated, through its secretary, Norton Shaw, a set of its Journals. Dorothea Lynde Dix, the great humanitarian, gave a copy of the History of the Massachusetts Hospital, Boston, 1851. Jared Sparks sent a copy of his *Reply to the Strictures of Lord Mahon and others on the mode of editing the writings of Washington*.

There were unforeseen delays in the refitting of the Library room, but in September 1852, Mr. Walter, the architect, was authorized to contract with Mr. Bandouine, of New York, for the furniture which included thirty-six chairs "of one pattern and without arms," and in the early autumn Mr. Meehan wrote the Speaker of the House: "The enclosed permission to close the [temporary] rooms of the Library of Congress for a month during the existing recess, in order that we may have an opportunity to cleanse the room and the books and to place every thing in proper condition for use at the ensuing session of Congress, was approved by the Library Committee at its last session, and was signed immediately by the President of the Senate." The assistant librarian had, so Mr. Meehan informed Speaker Boyd, "carried it over to you several times, but, as you were in the chair and in the midst of very arduous and engrossing business, it was not sent up to your chair, for fear of interrupting you." He, therefore, asked for final approval in order to set to work.

At the end of the tragic year there were signs of recovery. The large sums which Congress had voted were being spent. Large shipments of books had been received. The public, both at home and abroad, had been generous. But there was a touch of futility about the enterprise. The new Library, in a safer room, was to be merely a replica of the old. No one took advantage of the opportunity to devise a definition. No acquisitions policy, for which the Library had waited for half a century, was contrived. No imagination was anywhere discernible, save for the ingenuity of the architect. The new Library would be a show place; its balcony would continue to command a beautiful prospect; it would contain some enviable rarities; it would crystallize and harden as a mummy; but somewhere along the





*Water color drawing by Thomas U. Walter, Architect of the United States Capitol, of the "Iron Room" constructed in a space west of the Rotunda in the Capitol Building to house the Library of Congress after the fire of 1851.*





way it had become a victim of amnesia; it had forgotten its identity with the day-to-day work of Congress, with history and with a national purpose. But it had a strong spirit to survive.

### *The Carpet*

Quite abruptly the story of the Library became the story of a carpet. There was, to be sure, nothing magic about it, but it was a symbol, first of majesty and then decay. It was, in other words, the clue to records lost or hidden—its nap concealed them.

In the first place, Mr. Walter had been too sanguine in his expectations. Throughout the spring and early summer the Library of Congress had to perform such operations as it was capable of performing in its cramped and narrow temporary quarters. The contract for the construction of the "immense iron room" had been awarded to Messrs. Jones, Beebe & Company, of New York, and perhaps because it involved "several striking editions [sic] and improvements," there was encountered a series of problems which contributed to the delay. *The Washington News* for April 16 announced that it would "shortly be opened for the reception of the public" and hazarded the guess that it would be "the chief scene of attraction for visitors to our metropolis, next winter, as by that time the large number of rare, costly, and valuable books, purchased in Europe by order of Congress, will have been placed in this National Depository." As if to assure the public that progress actually was being made the *News* ("Nec temere—Nec timide") published the following description of the design which was certain to increase Mr. Walter's "reputation as an architect":

The library, when completed, will embrace the entire western projection of the present Capitol. The main room, which is the part of the design now being finished, is 91 feet long,

34 feet wide, and 38 feet high. It occupies the centre of the western projection, and connects at each end with a room of corresponding height, 29 feet 6 inches wide, and 70 feet 2 inches long. These rooms are fitted up with iron cases, and iron ceilings, similar to those of the main library. They are also roofed with copper laid on iron rafters, and lighted by ornamental skylights. The connexion between the centre and the end rooms is made by openings of 10 feet in width by 28 feet 6 inches in height, crowned by elliptical arches. There are also two additional apartments, each 18 feet 6 inches by 35 feet, one of which is now temporarily occupied by the library; thus forming a suite of *five* rooms, embracing an extent of 302 feet. These smaller apartments will be appropriated to the use of Senators and Members of the House of Representatives as private reading rooms.

The entire plan cannot, however, be carried out until accommodations are provided in the new wings for the officers of Congress, and the committees now occupying the north and south rooms of the western projection.

The main library room, which is now completed, embraces the space occupied by the old library before the fire. On both sides of the room are *three* stories of iron cases, each 9 feet 6 inches in height. The lower story consists of alcoves projecting 8 feet 6 inches into the room, with cases on each side of the projections. The second story has similar alcoves, excepting that their projection is but 5 feet, which leaves a platform of 3 feet 6 inches in width, resting on the cases below, and which constitute a commodious gallery. A similar platform is constructed on the alcoves of the second story, forming a gallery to approach the upper cases; thus making *three* stories, receding as they ascend. These galleries are continued across the ends of the room, where they are supported by massive brackets.

The alcoves are nine feet eight inches in width, from centre to centre, with an ornamental pier forming the head of each projection. The architraves which cross the alcoves are finished with shields, crowning bands and corner ornaments. The shields are designed as tablets to receive the names of the general subjects on which the books in the respective alcoves treat.

The galleries are all floored with cast iron plates and protected by pedestals and railings; they are approached by two semicircular stairways of cast iron, recessed in the end walls of the room.

The ceiling is wholly composed of iron; it is suspended from strong iron trusses, which likewise constitute the support of the roof; it rests on



*twenty-four* massy consoles, ornamented with foliage, fruits, and scrolls. Each of these consoles weighs nearly a ton. Their projection from the face of the walls is five feet six inches, their height five feet four inches, and their width twenty-one inches. The entire ceiling is divided into deeply sunken panels, and embellished with ornate mouldings and foliated pendants.

The room is lighted, in addition to the *five* windows in the western front, by *eight* sky-lights in the ceiling, each *six* feet square in the clear, filled in with ornamental glass, and protected by an upper sky-light of seventy-seven feet in length by ten feet six inches in width, placed on a corresponding angle with the roof, and covered with thick plates of glass. The roof is covered with copper, secured by copper wire to the iron rafters.

The furnaces for warming this portion of the building are completed, and in operation. They consist of hot water pipes enclosed in chambers erected in the old furnace room in the cellar, and connected with boilers for heating the water. The external air is admitted into these chambers where it is warmed and conveyed by flues into the library, and such of the adjacent rooms as were heated by the old furnaces.

Mr. Meehan was impatient to move in. On July 6 he wrote to Senator Pearce: "Mr. Walter told me, yesterday, that he informed the Secretary of the Interior, officially, last Saturday, that the Library Room was completed and ready to be delivered to the Librarian for its intended purposes." As yet he had "not received any further communication from him on the subject." There were "many little things" still to be done but they could "be done very well after the delivery" had been made. He had been informed by one of the workmen that the President had visited the room a few days before in the company of Sir Charles Lyell, the celebrated geologist, "and that Sir Charles pronounced it the most beautiful room in the world."

Shortly after posting this letter the official communication he had been so eagerly awaiting was handed to him, for on the same day he wrote Mr. Walter: "I have just received your letter of this date, stating

that on the first instant you had informed the Department of the Interior that the Congressional Library was so far completed as to be 'now ready to be transferred to the authorities who are ultimately to have charge of it;' and that in reply you had just received instructions to place the same in my possession, which, you proceed to say 'I hereby have the honor to do.'"

To this intelligence Mr. Meehan replied: "I take possession of the Room, accordingly and will, as early as practicable, place the furniture and books in it for the uses designated by law."

Mr. Meehan thereupon, with the permission of the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House planned to close "the room for one month to get the books in it, and to lay the carpets, and bring up the documents for exchanges from the room or cellar under the crypt, where they were placed after the fire."

Mr. Meehan wrote to the chairman in more detail on the eighth: "I have concluded not to place a hempen or other lining carpet on the floors as the main carpet will need no such protection. The floors will be made nearly as smooth as glass. In the course of next week I expect to have the carpets laid, and the new furniture in the proper places . . . We will close the Library on the twenty-first instant and commence placing the books in the alcoves, which we now have on shelves, and then take the books out of the boxes that are now in the crypt. The Library is to be opened again on the twenty-third of August, at which time I hope to have all the books placed in it."

Work went forward but was "much interrupted by visitors;" but Mr. Meehan felt "compensated for the loss of time . . . by the high gratification they express in relation to the beauty of the Room and the carpet." By the twentieth, Mr. Meehan had the pleasure of writing Senator Pearce "from the new Library Room, and of doing

the writing on the beautiful new desk." The staff, however, had sustained a serious loss. "Our colored laborer received a 'stroke of the sun,' during the recent very hot weather, and lingered until yesterday afternoon when he died." He had been an excellent person, "never drank a drop of spiritous or other intoxicating liquor, and had more good, hard, common sense, than is generally possessed by persons of his class." Mr. Meehan would try to replace him with "a young, energetic, and otherwise well qualified colored man."

Senator Charles Tillinghast James, of Rhode Island visited the room on the twenty-first and was very much pleased with it and "the carpet." Mr. Meehan reminded Senator Pearce that Senator James had been "in favor of bronzing the room, and had no faith in light colors." Now, however, "he admitted he was most agreeably disappointed in the transcendent beauty of the various shades in the light coloring enriched with a liberal use of gold."

The Library opened on schedule on August 23, and the occasion was reported by an ecstatic representative of the *Daily Evening Star*, to whom it was a "grand affair" in the following breathless terms:

This morning the newly built and splendid reorganized library of Congress, which was so materially injured by fire, was thrown open to the public, and a large number of ladies and gentlemen availed themselves of the opportunity to take a look at it. It is a gorgeous hall . . . The furniture is of black walnut, supplied by C. A. Bandouine, of New York, and is composed of fancy desks, sofas [sic], cushioned chairs, &c. of chaste and elegant classical models. The carpeting was supplied by Messrs. Clagett & Dodson of this city, and was handsomely laid out and arranged by Mr. L. F. Clark, also of Washington. It is of the very finest material and richest colors. . . . Mr. Delmano, of New York, did the painting and ornamenting, which is truly beautiful, the main color being a representation of Rutland stone, the pilasters, alcoves, &c.

are finely gilded, with chaste white shading, and the whole has a highly ornate and princely appearance.

Every article of furniture and other workmanship is of American manufacture, and are splendid specimens of art. . . . The polite Librarian, J. S. Meehan, Esq., informed us that there was about 25,000 volumes in the Library, and every day additions are being made, not only from our own country, but from Europe. . . . The balcony is a cool and refreshing place, and presents a point of view of the city unequalled. Nothing is now to be seen in Washington equal to this magnificent combination of works of art—this *chef d'oeuvre* of the art of ornamental building.

The carpet had been unrolled.

But the air was brittle and dusty with schisms; the Southern feet that trod the carpet were not going in the same direction as their Northern counterparts; the United States were less united than they had been; there were forces and influences and situations that made enemies and threatened war. The Library of Congress sought to remain neutral by excluding from its collections inflammatory, controversial, or sectional literature; the iron room was transformed into an ivory tower; it became absorbed in the past by ignoring the present; it was undergoing subtle changes. In the years preceding the outbreak of the War Between the States, the preoccupations of the heavy-hearted Congress were concentrated on other concerns. The collections grew, in fact, they grew more rapidly than ever before. They were used; they probably served many an excellent retrospective study; there were clamors to make them more and more accessible. An anonymous writer (perhaps J. M. Emerson himself) in the *United States Magazine* for August 1856, published an illustrated article on *The Capitol at Washington*. Among the pictures were several of the Library and its architectural details. In the iron room gentlemen in cutaway coats, leaning on handsome canes stood in little groups, talking. All wore their tall hats except for one or



two who seemed to find a barehead conducive to study. Several gentlemen were in the gallery, browsing; three appeared to be reading, but the four ladies were obviously enraptured sightseers. The article contained this paragraph:

During the session of Congress it [i. e. the Library] is open daily, and is a place of very great resort, especially by the numerous strangers in town, but during the recess it is open but twice a week; this should be remedied; it should be opened on every secular day during the year, and the absurd rule about admission should be repealed.

In spite of itself, it was beginning to have a national function. As for the "absurd rule," Chairman Pearce reported to the Senate on June 12, 1858:

Under the rules which were prescribed many years ago by the Vice President and Speaker of the House of Representatives, by authority of law, visitors are admitted to the library. Although these rules are silent as to the use of books by visitors, they are, in fact, allowed the use of books by reading them while there, and the means of making notes of what they read are readily furnished. They are also cheerfully aided by the Librarians and assistants in making researches.

By sufferance the Library of Congress had already become a public library for reference.

Mr. Meehan had grown old in the service when on May 24, 1861, he was removed from office. It has been said that the cause was attributed to his Southern sympathies, but if he felt them they were scrupulously concealed. In a letter to Paul Bossange, a New York book seller, written at the beginning of the month, he had observed that "the Government of the United States is as firm now as it ever was, and it will remain so throughout the present difficulties." His own difficulties were not mentioned in the letter-books. On the contrary he seemed to accept his dismissal with characteristic graciousness. In a letter to Senator Pearce on May 28 he mentioned only as a piece

of news the fact that "Mr. John G. Stevenson [Stephenson] of Indiana, who has been appointed by the President, Librarian of Congress will enter upon the duties of the office on the first day of June next." To Edward Allen, the London book seller, he wrote on the same day: "My duties as Librarian of Congress will terminate on the last day of the present month. Your letters of business must therefore be addressed to John G. Stevenson [sic] Esq. who will be my successor. Your agency will not be in any way disturbed by this change as your appointment is in the hands of the Library Committee. In closing the relation I have so long held with you as the Committee's organ of communication, I cannot refrain from expressing my regret, whilst I bear testimony to the faithfulness of your agency, and your ever prompt and intelligent attention to all the wishes of the Committee. I doubt not in the least that your official relations with my successor will be as satisfactory and happy as they have been with me." Mr. Meehan was invincibly a gentleman. In this, as in other matters, he enjoyed a personal triumph where Mr. Watterston had met a personal defeat.

The act of January 26, 1802, provided that the Librarian of Congress should be "appointed by the President of the United States solely." This clause was not amended until February 19, 1897, when "by and with the advice and consent of the Senate" was added. What Mr. Lincoln had done in relieving Mr. Meehan had been merely an exercise of presidential convenience and, in this case, he exhibited, as he sometimes did, an extraordinary ineptitude. Mr. Lincoln with his remarkable genius for understanding men was not infrequently a miserable failure in his judgment of a man. Now he seems to have been not indifferent to political considerations. John G. Stephenson had been a practicing physician in Terre

Haute, Indiana, before coming to Washington in February 1861, in the company of Senator Henry S. Lane, who, in the recent Republican Convention, had energetically opposed Seward's candidacy and had played an important part in bringing about Lincoln's nomination. Dr. Stephenson was looking for a job, and in his efforts secured the support of Caleb B. Smith, who had been a seconder of Lincoln's nomination and had gone on the stump in his behalf. Mr. Smith was appointed Secretary of the Interior on the same day that Stephenson succeeded to the librarianship. Mr. Lincoln had once been a Hoosier himself.

Dr. Stephenson had been born in Lancaster, New Hampshire, where he was educated at the Lancaster Academy and where he took part in amateur theatricals. He had subsequently removed to Indiana, and had embarked upon a career in medicine. Details of his earlier life are lacking, but in the *Indiana Business Directory* for 1858-59, his name appeared as physician and surgeon (p. 372 and 542), and as President (p. 361) of the Fort Harrison Guard, organized in 1857. His name was entered on the pay roll as Librarian of Congress, as of June 1, 1861, but the first document signed by him over that title was written (it was undated) on or after August 6, and was a request made to Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury for the issue of a warrant on account of salaries "of the officers and messenger of the Library of Congress for the fourth quarter of the fiscal year 1860-61." Indeed, his autograph was written so seldom in the letter books that two conclusions are inescapable: one, that he delegated responsibility for the management of the Library to his assistants; two, that he was absent much of the time. This is explained in large part by his participation in the War. In November 1863, the resident members of the old First Army Corps

met at the office of Col. Dudley and passed resolutions expressing their regret "at the death of Dr. J. G. Stephenson, who served in that corps during the War." At the Battle of Gettysburg, he served as a volunteer aide to General Meredith, and in the words of his Corps Commander "he exposed himself freely on all occasions and rendered many valuable services." That he had been in the thick of the fighting on that occasion may be presumed from the fact that the First Brigade of the First Division, commanded by General Meredith, suffered 1,153 casualties.

Of the annual reports which Dr. Stephenson, as Librarian of Congress, made to the Joint Committee on the Library two have survived.

The first was filed December 16, 1861, and was not signed, from which it may be assumed that it was the work of an assistant. The situation as it then existed was extremely alarming. Neither fire nor water had accomplished the destruction of the Library, but there was ample evidence of the greater annihilating power of neglect. There were conspicuous deficiencies in the collections. Among the lacunae were modern reference books of all sorts. There was, for example "no encyclopaedia of later date than the 'Britannica' [sic] of 1842," despite the fact that "a later edition of that work and several new ones" had recently been issued. The report stated "That no Encyclopaedia, less than twenty years old is to be found in the Library of Congress is matter of constant surprise and inconvenience to Members and others seeking the latest statistical and scientific information." Another source of embarrassment was the want of a complete file of some American newspaper, "furnishing a full, current history of the times for the last twenty years." With the exception of the *National Intelligencer*, "the deficiencies of which in this respect are well known, and a fragment of the *New*



*York Evening Post*," there was "no file in the Library" that covered "this eventful period in our history." The Committee was urged to secure runs of the *New York Tribune* and the *New York Herald*.

The Library contained some 71,635 volumes and pamphlets, of which 14,632 (one third were duplicates) were in the Law Library, and "57,003 in the miscellaneous or general library." The quantities of duplicates were a nuisance. "They occupy valuable shelf room, seriously embarrass the arrangement of the chapters, and with the exception of a few leading works of which several copies must necessarily be kept, they are never practically used at all." It was recommended that the Committee authorize "the disposal of this rubbish at public auction and the appropriation of the proceeds to the Contingent Fund of the Library."

Mr. Meehan had been at fault in every particular. The usefulness of the new general catalog was destroyed "by the defective system of classification employed and by the large and surprising omissions which occur in it." The Library's accounts were "found in a very loose and neglected condition." There was no index whatever of "books missing, or drawn out and unreturned." Actually, "the entries of books delinquent were scattered through six or eight receipt books, under the names of several hundred members, so that it was impossible to know who was charged with any given work which was found to be missing." The defect had been remedied "by the preparation of a full alphabetical index of all books under their respective titles." The agent of the Library who received a commission of ten percent "on such price as he is pleased to charge for books and binding" was unsatisfactory. It had been necessary to remove several incompetent members of the staff, and in replacing them the Librarian had been "guided neither by personal nor political

favoritism," but had "sought for capacity and industry alone as the indispensable qualifications of his appointees."

The collections were in a deplorable state. It had been "necessary to subject the entire Library to a thorough cleansing and re-arrangement." As a matter of fact, "the various Chapters were scattered throughout the four rooms occupied by the Library, not one of the forty being collected or arranged together." As a consequence, "all the books in the outer rooms were found covered with accumulated dust and in many cases hidden amid rubbish and in dark and out-of-the-way corners, inaccessible save to the most persevering explorer." Moreover, "several valuable and costly works were found perishing from carelessness and abuse, and in one case an entire set of books were found ruined by wet and consequent mould." Several hundred volumes had been "nearly worn out by incessant use, having been issued again and again to readers after the covers were loose and the leaves started, without being repaired."

And there was this poignant note: "The Carpet [it was spelled with a capital 'C'] in the main Library had not been cleaned for over three years, and in the other rooms for a period nearly twice as long." It had been "the most indispensable step . . . to remove every book in the Library from its place, to take up all the carpets in all the rooms" and to devote seven weeks during the recess of Congress, with the assistance of four extra laborers, to the removal of grime and dirt. "The Western portico of the Capitol open to the air, was occupied for the work, and every book was then beaten and brushed until the signs of dust had disappeared." As for the carpet, "eight years in use and saturated with almost every description of dirt," it was "carefully and laboriously cleaned and re-laid in all the rooms except the east, or rear room, where the smooth

stone floor was found much more appropriate than the old carpet, discolored and worn to rags as it was."

The report contained little about circulation. Many valuable works had "been lost, and some costly sets broken by the delinquencies of those entitled to the use of the Library." The total number of missing volumes was 981, of these, 856 volumes were "charged to persons no longer Members of Congress or of the government," while 276 volumes were "charged to persons belonging to the so-called seceded States." In the absence of statistics it is necessary to look for internal evidence. The dust on the books would indicate that they had not been in constant demand. The feet of casual tourists must have accounted for the decline of the once beautiful carpet.

There was an urgent need of "some definite and prescribed rules regulating the use of the Library." There were no printed rules for those "entitled to the privileges of the Library," and in their absence it was found "difficult to enforce even the most necessary and proper regulations, without giving offence." A draft or "synopsis" had been prepared, "clearly defining the extent of the privileges," as "the only means whereby its [i. e. the Library's] benefits can be equitably shared among those entitled to them." It was submitted to the Committee for "approval or modification."

The entire report of 1861 was a dirge and a diatribe on the Library doldrums. Nothing was right. Everything was at loose ends. The Library had reached a new and strange and unpleasant level of despair.

Something of the same character was displayed in the report of January 7, 1863. The Library, in terms of size, was then the fourth largest in the United States, and contained 79,214 volumes. Additional shelf room was required, along with floors

that would "need no carpets." It was estimated that in the future the Library would increase at a rate of six or seven thousand volumes a year. It was necessary, therefore, to complete the Walter design of 1851; but even with the additional accommodation which that would provide there would be room only for the accretions of another decade. The carpet was completely worn out, and in the opinion of Dr. Stephenson "it would be absurd to forget considerations of cleanliness and economy and put new carpets on these floors, instead of putting down here floors that will need no carpets." He hoped for marble which would cost between three and four thousand dollars.

In order to improve the transmission of books "to and from the houses of members," the Librarian asked for authority "to employ an additional messenger and to keep a horse and wagon for the purpose." Many of the volumes reported as missing at the last session had been recovered, but he was convinced that some would never be returned. Every effort had been made to restrict the issue of books to those officers of government specifically authorized by statute, and, to a considerable extent, the effort had been successful, but still, so runs the report, "some books are taken from the Library for the use of persons not entitled by law to have them, and some of these go wandering round the City and in some instances round the Country in their uncertain way back to the Library which they reach in a dilapidated condition and some never."

As an experiment, the Librarian had sent one of his assistants, A. R. Spofford, to New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, to purchase books for the collections. The average cost of books purchased by the committee's agent in the United States since December 1860, had been, including binding and all expenses three dollars and twenty-seven cents per volume; but by



Mr. Spofford's mission it had been proved possible to lower the cost, including traveling, binding and all other expenses, to one dollar and seventy cents per volume. The success of this experiment suggested the desirability of establishing direct purchases as regular practice. Binding, during the year, had been awarded to J. B. Lippincott and Pawson & Nicholson, both of Philadelphia; the results were altogether gratifying.

Dr. Stephenson asked "the attention of the Committee to the present cleanliness and order of the Library—to the ability, energy, and fidelity of its subordinate officers,—and to the promptness with which the wants of Members of Congress are supplied." He expressed, at the same time, his "confident expectation of giving the management of this Library an efficiency not surpassed anywhere."

James Alfred Pearce had died December 20, 1862, and Dr. Stephenson quite appropriately concluded his report with a tribute. "The records of the Committee and the history of the Library declare him to have been the friend and guardian of this library. He has selected all or nearly all of the books that have been ordered since the fire, has ever manifested a jealous care for its safety, and has had more than any other man the control and direction of the library, for which his high literary attainments well fitted him. He has left his mark on the Library ineffaceably. The elegant courtesy of his manners and the kindness of his feeling made his presence in the Library always a pleasure to everyone employed there. By his death the interests of the Library have lost their best advocate, and its officers have lost a valued friend and counsellor."

His chairmanship had covered a span of nearly seventeen years.

The leaders of Congress, the President and his cabinet, and several general officers of the Army made use of the

Library during the war. A study of the surviving borrowers' ledgers (many are missing) indicates that the Library's constituents between 1800 and 1867 represented in the collective careers—

15 Presidents of the United States.	3 Chief Justices of the United States.
12 Vice Presidents.	
448 Senators.	24 Associate Justices of the Supreme Court.
2,076 Representatives.	
64 Delegates from Territories.	8 Judges of other Courts.
23 Secretaries of State.	86 American Diplomats.
25 Secretaries of the Treasury.	55 Foreign Diplomats.
21 Secretaries of War.	73 General Officers of the United States Army.
10 Secretaries of the Navy.	22 General Officers of the Confederate States Army.
9 Secretaries of the Interior.	
15 Attorneys General.	62 Governors of States and Territories.
19 Postmasters General.	19 Authors.
6 Delegates to the Continental Congress.	8 Scientists.
3 Delegates to the Constitutional Convention.	27 Journalists.
	17 Clergymen.

This enumeration, imperfect and inconclusive as it is, serves to show the extent, if not the degree, of the impact which the Library must have made upon the lives of the several generations of people of the United States.

And yet it cannot be demonstrated that the contents of the Library exercised any important, much less decisive influence on the conduct of the Civil War. On the contrary, during that period, it seems to have possessed little interest even for the private citizens of the District of Columbia. *The Sunday Morning Chronicle* for November 13, 1864, asked questions on that score:

Why is it that, with such attractions, so complete an assemblage of books in every field of literature and science, the Library of Congress is so little frequented by our citizens? We seldom see more

than half a dozen persons perusing books in the marble paved hall, whose rich yet tasteful adornments seem to enhance the attractions of the handsomely bound volumes which crowd the shelves. Can it be generally known that the reading room is free to all? It is true no books can be withdrawn from the Library, for it is the Library of Congress, and properly guarded by law against the loss or injury to which all circulating libraries are liable. But there must be a large proportion of our citizens, especially ladies, who have leisure to frequent such an institution during the hours when it is open to the public. It is certainly surprising that such ample facilities for investigating every topic of human inquiry should be so little used, except by the Members of Congress.

There had been important additions to the collections. They were especially rich in books relating to "the discovery, settlement, history, and topography of the American continent." It was said that this "branch of literature" was "a special feature of the selections for increase of the Library, under its present management." There had been numerous accretions to the collections of the Law Library which included copies of "nearly every trial for treason, ancient or modern," and was in that respect "the most complete one outside the British Museum." Abraham Lincoln had transmitted a copy of a dispatch to the Secretary of State from Mr. Adams, United States Minister at London, and of the correspondence to which it refers between that gentleman and Mr. Panizzi, the principal Librarian of the British Museum, relative to certain valuable publications presented to the library of Congress." The gift, which consisted of some of the Museum's monumental catalogs, had been received. But there was a general indifference.

Toward the end of 1864, Dr. Stephenson was prompted to resign. He had, it is said, become involved "in speculations created by the war." Perhaps these were a partial explanation of a law approved

June 8, 1872, authorizing and directing the Secretary of the Treasury "to pay to Edward G. Allen, of London, England . . . the sum of fourteen hundred and eighty dollars, the purchase-money for books for the library of Congress, of which sum he was unjustly defrauded by the conduct of the librarian, in the year eighteen hundred and sixty-three." Mr. Meehan's assurance that Mr. Allen would find his official relations with Dr. Stephenson as satisfactory and happy as they had been with him had not been realized. As for Dr. Stephenson, he found employment elsewhere in the Government.

It is difficult to appraise the service he had rendered to the Library. Perhaps it was a neater and more orderly place when he left it. He seems always to have exercised the altogether commendable insistence on cleanliness which occupied so much space in his reports and on one occasion complained that the Capitol bakeries were turning the collections "black with smoke-dust and soot." But either because of the death of Senator Pearce, or because of his own protracted absences, or his personal lack of scholarly distinction, or only because of the war itself, the Library had fallen on evil days. The *Sunday Chronicle* had mentioned "the marble paved hall." The carpet had been discarded.

### *The Third Thrust*

On December 31, 1864, Grant was still in the trenches before Petersburg, Sherman was preparing to strike northward from Savannah, and Sheridan and Thomas were receiving the Northern plaudits which followed their recent triumphs in the Valley and at Nashville. The fact that a member of the staff of the Library of Congress, who had for some years been supplying the place of the absentee Librarian, was on that day appointed by President Lincoln to the post of Librarian of



Congress was in and of itself, hardly a transaction likely to figure largely in the public eye. On January 5, 1865, the *New York Times* carried a small paragraph reporting that the new Librarian had on that day entered upon the duties of his office, and beyond this the public interest—if there was a public interest—went unsatisfied. The appointment, however, was to prove an event of the greatest consequence for the development of the institution and for the idea of a national library. The new incumbent was to serve for thirty-two years, and during that time would witness, inspire, or direct developments determining the nature and future of the Library of Congress, and its position in the intellectual and social life of the Nation.

Mr. Lincoln's appointee was Ainsworth Rand Spofford, now in his fortieth year, who had been a member of the Library's staff since September 1861, and had been in charge most of the time, while John G. Stephenson was following the wars and winning mention in the dispatches. If there could be said to have been such things as professional librarians in the America of 1865, Mr. Spofford was certainly not of their number. He was the son of a New England clergyman, the Reverend Luke Ainsworth Spofford of Gilmanton, New Hampshire, of the sixth generation of his family in America. As the son of a clergyman, he was of course prepared for college, attending Williston Seminary for that purpose, but in the end medical opinion pronounced that his eyes and lungs were both too weak to enter upon the severe application of college studies, and he had to abandon his intention of matriculating at Amherst. It is pleasant to record that nearly forty years later, in 1882, Amherst bestowed upon him, now famous for his services at Washington, an honorary Doctorate of Laws. Instead he went west, but not too far west, to

Cincinnati, and succeeded in outgrowing and completely overcoming these physical handicaps. Herbert Putnam reported of his later years that he gloried "in the assiduity which his hardy, if attenuated, frame permitted: for the weakness of the lungs survived only in a mechanical cough, and the weakness of the eyes was remedied so completely that in his eighty-second year he resisted a prescription for glasses as premature and derogatory."

Even less did he permit his disappointment to interfere with his passion for literature. He found congenial employment with E. D. Truman, book seller, publisher and stationer, of 75 Main Street, Cincinnati. Mr. Truman was the publisher of Mason's *Sacred Harp*, Smith's *Productive Grammar*, and Miss Beecher's *Moral Instructor*, kept "always on hand, and for sale at the lowest rates, school books of every variety used in the West and South," and stood ready to see "all who purchase to sell again, Teachers, Schools, &c., supplied with every article in the Book and Stationery line, at REDUCED PRICES FOR CASH." Young Mr. Spofford clearly mastered the schoolbook trade, for in or about 1850, when E. D. Truman passed to such reward as awaits a stationer, his relict, Elizabeth Truman, took the clerk as a partner, and the establishment, now at 111 Main Street, became TRUMAN & SPOFFORD, book sellers and publishers. So it remained for a decade, until 1860, when the Main Street address was acquired by Henry Howe. Ainsworth Spofford took advantage of his business success to woo and wed Sarah Partridge, and in 1852 they "set up their small housekeeping . . . on Walnut Hills."

Making his living by means of books was, however, but the beginning of Mr. Spofford's self-cultivation. He was, now and always, "an omnivorous and rapid reader of books," as a Cincinnati friend of this period described him. Eschewing

newspapers, and paying little regard to contemporary fiction, he made political, historical, and biographical literature his staple diet. Among contemporary writers Carlyle, and, of his countrymen, Emerson, Hawthorne, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Theodore Parker were his favorites. The extent of his miscellaneous reading was remarkable, but even more so was the retentiveness of his memory, both for facts and for the sources in which facts might be found. If he mastered no particular branch of learning sufficiently to be regarded as an expert or specialist therein, he certainly did acquire a broadly based and widely ramified humanistic culture, together with a power of expression highly coherent and logical as to organization, and smoothly harmonious as to phrase. This form of exposition looked back to eighteenth-century rather than to Romantic and Victorian models, and certain people in the latter part of Spofford's life professed to regard it as rather quaint. That Mr. Spofford could be informal and familiar enough when the occasion called for those attributes, is evidenced by his address on the fiftieth anniversary of the Literary Club of Cincinnati, on October 29, 1899.

Just why Mr. Spofford was an appropriate choice for speaker on that evening is made clear by the circumstance that it was largely on his initiative that the Club had been founded fifty years earlier. The plan of the Club first was broached at an informal meeting in his rooms, and its initial membership was made up from his friends and acquaintances. After half a century he looked back to Monday evening, October 20, 1849, and reminisced:

I remember almost as freshly as if it were last year, the first gathering of just a dozen young fellows to organize this immortal Club. At Nelson Cross's law office on Third street, we met, discussed plans and objects, determined upon alternate essays and discussions for our literary

exercises, and fixed on the last Saturday evening of every month for an informal gathering of a more social character, with a Club paper or miscellany, and an editor changed monthly.

At the informals, our frugal refection did not go beyond sandwiches and dry Catawba, with an occasional adjournment by twos and threes to Glassner's, over the Rhine, for prime lager beer, with a bead on it. We were great sticklers for the Club rules, in those callow days, and had among us a few of those litigious fellows, such as have wrecked many a literary society, who fancied that our temporal and eternal welfare depended upon the Constitution and By-laws. But we soon outgrew that folly, and became absorbed, with ever-growing interest, in the questions that always divide opinion, questions of government, society, history, literature, and manners. At our informals, stories, songs, and recitations filled up the flying hours, as James H. Beard, the artist, sang "Feerinu," with irresistible humor; or Edwin D. Dodd gave the pathetic ballad of "The Tall Young Oysterman;" or Henry B. Blackwell sang "The Old Field Marshal Come Home from the Wars;" or Billy McDowell roared forth "The Widow Machree;" or Edward P. Cranch or William Miller, the artist, sang a comic song.

Recitations, too, were frequent, and we stirred one another up to rehearse our favorite poems or listened to Rutherford B. Hayes as he declaimed with marvelous energy Webster's magnificent encomium upon the Union.

Hayes was not among the charter members, but he joined the Club in the following year, 1850, as did Henry B. Blackwell, who survived to deliver his reminiscences of "Dr. Spofford in Cincinnati, 1845-1860", at the memorial meeting held at the Library of Congress on November 12, 1908. Other members of the Club in Spofford's day who attained to a greater or smaller degree of national prominence were Salmon P. Chase, Oliver P. Morton, Moncure D. Conway, Donn Piatt, and Murat Halstead; Alphonso Taft joined in 1860, shortly before Mr. Spofford's departure from the city, while his more famous son, William Howard Taft, became a member in his turn in 1878. In the Club's first year Spofford succeeded in attracting a famous visitor to come and lecture. By raising



a pledged subscription of \$150, and the offer of as much more as the lecture-tickets might bring, he brought Ralph Waldo Emerson to Cincinnati for the first time:

He replied that he had just settled down to his spring gardening (it was the month of May, 1850,) but that my letter had awakened a long-cherished desire to see the Ohio River and all that lay between it and his home.

So Emerson came and gave us "The Conduct of Life," or five lectures which were the foundation of that book. So well attended were they that when I came to tender the net proceeds to him there were some \$560. Said Mr. Emerson, with that quaint, wise, and radiant smile of his: "What shall I do, Mr. Spofford, with these gifts of the good Providence which you bring me?" "Well, Mr. Emerson," said I, "I think, perhaps, that you had better invest them." "An excellent idea," he replied; "I will write to my brother William, a lawyer in Brooklyn, who knows about such things, and get him to find me an investment. So, will you kindly get me some kind of a draft for \$500 and give me the rest in money?"

Our Literary Club took Mr. Emerson on an excursion to Fort Ancient, that old Indian earth-work, and we sat long under the trees on the grassy mounds, on one of those delicious June days when the earth puts on her choicest array to stir the senses to gladness. As we chatted over our modest refection, moistened by sundry bottles of Ohio's choicest vintage, Emerson told a story. It was of a Harvard professor of German, himself a German, who went to a Cambridge livery stable one fine winter day for a horse and sleigh to take a lady out sleigh-riding. The weather was very mild, and on broaching the question of the most suitable lap robes, the livery-man inquired: "Professor, shall I put in a buffalo?" "My God, no! put in a horse!" cried the alarmed professor.

The success of the great Emerson's visit paved the way for a number of other visiting lecturers, under the auspices of the Literary Club and arranged for by the energy of Ainsworth Spofford. Another of his favorite authors, Theodore Parker, was among the visitors, as were Bronson Alcott, Andrew Jackson Davis, and Moncure D. Conway—presumably before his transfer from Washington to Cincinnati, after which he became, in 1857, a regular member of the Club.

The Club which Spofford founded and supported as a means to his own literary development thus became in some degree a "cell" for the dissemination of New England transcendentalism and radicalism in the West, and in the latter movement he fully shared. "As the antislavery conflict thickened," wrote his friend Henry Blackwell, "we became radical free-soilers." In 1851, the year after the Compromise of 1850 and the stringent Fugitive Slave Law which it involved, Spofford made his contribution to the slavery controversy, an anonymous pamphlet of fifty-four pages, published at New York by S. W. Benedict. *The Higher Law Tried by Reason and Authority*, considered the arguments which had been put forth in opposition to Senator William E. Seward's speech of March 11, 1850, in which he spoke of "a higher law than the Constitution." Seward's words did not necessarily imply a right of resistance to legislation within the framework of the Constitution but, condemned by conscience, this was the sense in which his opponents took them, and this was the sense in which Spofford anonymously defended them. Concerning the absence of his name he wrote in the preface,

This publication is anonymous. If the principles which it aims to establish are true, they need no man's name to give them warrant; if they are not true, then the author will best subserve the cause of truth by remaining nameless. . . . While the author is personally indifferent to the reception of his work, and leaves it to gather dust upon the shelf, or make its mark upon the town, as the time may send, or the trade-winds may blow, he has an abiding faith in the triumph of the principles it maintains.

That the fate of the pamphlet was to gather dust upon the shelf is true enough, but it remains nevertheless an interesting memorial of the ideas of the day in which it was written, and of the thought of its author, in whom we are interested for other reasons. Taking for his premise

"that as the actual foundation of all law is public opinion, so ITS SOLE SANCTION IS ITS REASON AND JUSTICE," he proceeded to such instances and arguments as the following:

Many States have attempted to enforce laws against the traffic in intoxicating drinks. Such laws have been passed, and after strong and repeated efforts, with all the machinery of government to back the law, have fallen to the ground null and void. However good and desirable these laws might be in their effects,—if carried out,—it cannot be gainsaid that they have been defeated by a Higher Law,—by a public opinion which feels that the mere physical appetite of drinking cannot justly be controlled by civil law.

Thus we might go on, citing instance after instance to prove, that there are some laws which are ridiculous, and fall to the ground by the Higher Law of common sense;—some laws which are obsolete, and are defeated by the Higher Law of human progress;—some laws which are inconvenient and are ruled by the Higher Law of necessity;—some laws which are unnatural and are null by the Higher Law of instinct and of nature; and some laws which are *unjust*, and are void by the Higher Law of conscience and of God.

That it was the last-defined class to which the Fugitive Slave Law belonged appears from a number of powerfully rhetorical passages, among which, from the penultimate page of the book, is the following:

To hear the daily talk of men, one would think that no law was ever disobeyed till now; no act of legislation ever so much as questioned before. Politicians gravely tell us that the Higher Law is treason,—and Divines preach solemn sermons to prove the Statute Book infallibly inspired! Yet, every day witnesses the breach of laws far more reasonable, and a hundred times as righteous. Men can swear unlawful invoices at the Custom-House,—take unlawful interest,—drive trades unlawfully on Sunday,—make unlawful bets,—rent unlawful brothels,—sell unlawful liquors without license,—yes, vent unlawful oaths against the "Higher Law", and who is there that cares a pin? Men may break all these laws, and more, for the sake of interest, and there is not a dog to wag his tongue, but let a man disobey an unjust law, for sake of principle, and the whole land rings with the cry of treason! The very man who will break every law, human or divine, for the Al-

mighty Dollar, sneers at the "fanaticism" of him who keeps the law of Almighty God!

The incipient librarian in Spofford appears in a catalog of authorities on pages 42-46, where Blackstone, Lord Brougham, Montesquieu, Bacon, Burke, Sir James Mackintosh, Cicero, Coke, and Francis Lieber are cited *seriatim*.

His absorption in the slavery struggle led Ainsworth Spofford both into politics and into journalism. The friend of his youth, Henry Blackwell, tells us that "in 1855-56 Mr. Spofford went as a delegate to the Philadelphia Convention which nominated John C. Frémont on a platform opposing any further admission of slave states. He there made a speech which was highly commended." It does not appear precisely which convention Blackwell had in mind; Mr. Spofford's name does not appear among the Ohio delegates to the Philadelphia Convention of June 1856, the first national convention of the Republican Party; and it is hardly probable that he would have been found among the American or Know-Nothing Party—which based itself on the superior virtues and rights of persons of native birth—whose convention met on February 22, and a seceding wing of which repudiated the nomination of Millard Fillmore and chose Frémont instead. In 1859 Spofford became assistant editor and editorial writer of the *Cincinnati Commercial*, at that time probably the leading daily to the city, and one of the best known and most influential papers west of the Appalachians. Printed and published by M. D. Potter and Co. at the Commercial Building, northeast corner of Fourth and Race Streets, it set forth its qualities in the following manner:

The *Cincinnati Commercial* has now become known and recognized throughout the country as a first-class, leading Newspaper, and a full, reliable, prompt, and every-where quoted vehicle of political intelligence. Its means enable it to



command the very best and earliest sources of information, telegraphic or otherwise. Its correspondence is extensive, and its columns bear evidence to the care and completeness with which the current news of all parts of the country is prepared for its readers.

In 1861, as events were moving toward a crisis and the demand for news from all parts of the country was rapidly growing, Ainsworth Spofford amplified the *Commercial's* sources of information by turning traveling correspondent. The *Commercial's* correspondents sometimes followed the quaint practice of signing their telegrams and letters with a Greek letter; there were "Omega" and "Kappa," and there was now added "SIGMA," who may with practical certainty be identified as Ainsworth R. Spofford. Sigma, or Spofford, went to Washington in January to cover the secession crisis and remained through the inauguration. His first telegraphic dispatch from Washington was dated January 16, 1861; brief news items were wired as well, while longer descriptions of events or appreciations of the situation were incorporated in "Letters from Washington" which went by express—the day of long-winded journalistic telegraphy was still in the future. However, the inauguration of President Lincoln was important enough for an exception, and Spofford sent a rather detailed description over the wires:

Mr. Lincoln rose, calm, collected and serene in manner, and, with a preliminary glance over his vast and imposing auditory, put on his spectacles and began to read. He looked neither anxious nor care-worn, but his cheerfulness was marked, and his clear, firm tones of voice, as he read with great deliberation and precision of emphasis, penetrated the extremities of the hushed and attentive crowd, who covered acres of ground. The inaugural address . . . was applauded repeatedly and, at times, rapturously . . . The final appeal . . . was received with round after round of cheering, and at the close, men waved their hats and broke forth in the heartiest manifestations of delight. The extraordinary clearness, straightforwardness and lofty spirit of patriotism

which pervaded the whole address, impressed every listener, while the evident earnestness, sincerity and manliness of Mr. Lincoln extorted the praise even of his enemies. Never surely was an inaugural address received with more favor by the majority of those who heard it. Mr. Buchanan sat with his hat on his head and eyes closed during most of the delivery, while Mr. Douglas stood on Lincoln's right, next the stand, listening attentively, and hardly once took his eyes off the speaker, while Mr. Cameron stood with his back to the President, . . . peering off into the crowd, and apparently occupied with heavy thoughts of office.

In later years Librarian Spofford was celebrated for an almost complete detachment from politics and an unwillingness to state his opinion on any public issue. But in the "Secession Winter," Spofford the Washington correspondent was a fiery and malicious partisan, whose *bête noir* and special butt was the Secessionist Senator from Texas, Louis T. Wigfall. A supplementary dispatch the day after the inauguration contains a characteristic fling:

A great many Southern men express their unexpected satisfaction with Lincoln. Senator Johnson, of Tennessee, endorses every word of the Inaugural. Crittenden, Powell, and Breckinridge, think there will be peace. Wigfall says war is inevitable—but who cares for Wigfall?

While in his last "Letter from Washington" on this assignment, dated March 12, Sigma-Spofford took the occasion of Wigfall's threatened expulsion from the Senate to indulge in some all-out invective:

He, Wigfall—the illustrious, fire-eating, daredevil, bibulous, boozy, harum-scarum Senator and Secessionist, representing a whole Commonwealth of warriors and wildcats, renowned for the fighting qualities of her sons, and rendered newly illustrious by the treason of her Twiggs—he, Wigfall, was to be honored by expulsion from that body, whose authority he had derided, and against whose government he had declared himself ready to take up arms.

Spofford returned to Cincinnati in March and the following month participated in the most unusual of all the meetings of the Literary Club, presided over by Ruther-

ford B. Hayes, who, in the course of the approaching war, was to rise to the brevet rank of major-general. The *Commercial* of April 18 reported the meeting in a paragraph, the authorship of which is not difficult to guess:

LITERARY CLUB DRILL.—The members of this old organization met last evening, and adopted a plan of organization for forming an infantry company. Also appointed committees on arms and on drill. Thirty-six members enrolled themselves on the spot, and proceeded to drill under the direction of R. W. Burnet, Esq., whose skill in military science now becomes highly opportune.

Spofford was one of those who proceeded to drill on this occasion, but his proficiency in the manual of arms could not have become very great before he was back at his correspondent's post in Washington, ready to report the expected forward movement of the Union Army into Virginia. On July 2 Sigma began his first telegram from Washington, "The National Capital is overflowing with soldiers, politicians and jobbers." A few weeks later he was one of the motley horde of spectators who followed the volunteer army of McDowell to the fateful field of Bull Run. The correspondent of the *Commercial* made use of his connections to accompany into action the Second Ohio Regiment, on the staff of which was Captain Donn Piatt, late of the Literary Club. In the course of their advance the regiment suddenly came under the cross-fire of concealed guns, and the future Librarian of Congress executed a strategic retreat:

As it was sufficiently manifest . . . that we had run straight into the teeth of a masked battery, I embraced a short interval in the firing to withdraw from so immediate a contact with the leading actors in the drama. As I was armed with no more formidable weapon than a lead pencil, my object in making a retrograde movement was twofold: to secure the safety of the notes and observations of the pencil aforesaid, at the same time retaining the possession of my own personal head. The result showed that I was more fortunate in

the latter than in the former object. I saved my head, but in the frequent dodges and genuflections which that desirable object rendered necessary, I lost my notes, which were held loosely in my hand, in the edge of the timber. They were picked up and handed me half an hour later, by Surgeon Webb, to whom and to others, they furnished matter for a little good humored amusement, as illustrating the subject of my retreat. As the notes were of no particular value, and I had effected the main object sought for, by getting out of cannon-shot range, I concluded to laugh and win.

He might take thus lightly his private discomfiture, but Sigma was nevertheless sternly insistent upon fixing the responsibility and meting out retribution for the public disaster. In the issue of July 25 he declared:

When stupendous disasters occur, and are fresh in the public mind, and before the bleeding wounds of the thousands bereaved are yet closed, it is the plain duty of the press to point out the causes which led to such terrible reverses, that they may serve as a lesson and a warning. That which is gained to the cause of the Government by the sacrifice of the cause of truth, is a dishonest gain, which must sooner or later recoil in new disasters of mal-administration, yet more signal and fatal.

In the issue of July 27 he recurred to the misadventure of the Second Ohio as an example of the faults of the Union leadership:

But, after all, the running into that ambushade was only one of a vast series of blunders, which appear to have pursued the leaders\* of this ill-fated movement, from its inception to its disastrous and well nigh disgraceful close. Generals McDowell and Tyler, who must divide between them the responsibility for this defeat, having given the orders, appear to have been afraid of losing two or three scouts, and therefore sent none out in advance to discover the localities of the enemy's batteries. They preferred, apparently, to run their troops right into them, in the most hazardous traps of places, where the impossibility of advancing was only equalled by that of escaping without severe loss.

Mr. Spofford left Washington for the second time early in August, and in the last paragraph of his last letter, dated



August 6, he was still inveighing against officers' incompetence, this time in connection with commissions given through political influence:

The only hope remaining lies in the assurance, which the high character and military strictness of Maj.-Gen. McClellan renders almost certain, that a rigid test of fitness will be applied to every applicant before sending him into the field. There are ample reasons for believing that ignorance, malfeasance, or neglect of duty hereafter exhibited on the part of any officer, will be promptly adjudged sufficient ground for cashiering him. Let no man conscious of his incapacity, venture to put on the epaulettes. Let him avoid certain disgrace by emulating the example of the numerous incompetents who are now resigning, to escape court-martial for their misconduct at and after Bull's Run.

SIGMA.

Mr. Spofford now went West, but instead of remaining in Cincinnati, ventured further in his rôle of roving correspondent, and addressed to the *Commercial* a series of letters from St. Louis, and one from Camp Dick Robinson, near Danville, Kentucky. But he was back in Washington early in September, this time for good. Whether his appointment at the Library of Congress had been arranged prior to his journey to St. Louis does not appear. That it took effect on or shortly after September 22 may be judged from the fact that Sigma's last telegraphic dispatch from Washington is of that date. But the fact that earlier he had been spending time at the Capitol may be seen from two passages in his letters to the *Commercial*, sufficiently interesting in themselves:

From the dome of the Capitol, to-day, I witnessed the rebel earth-works on Munson's Hill--a point which has become famous as the nearest commanding, and yet occupied by the enemy . . . Through a powerful glass you can see the bold crest of the hill, peeping above the intervening woods, and heaped with the fresh earth which has been turned in process of erecting fortifications. The trees have nearly all been cut away from the summit of Munson's Hill, but a few are left standing, among which the tall flag-

staff, bearing the blood red banner of the rebellion, is plainly visible.

This was on September 11, and the same theme is recurred to in a letter of the seventeenth, in which the vantage point is still the Capitol and its unfinished but still commanding dome:

On the top of the finished portion of the Capitol dome, there is a fine opportunity, not elsewhere equalled in Washington, for viewing the encampments of our army, and the locality of the advanced lines of the enemy. The dome is visited daily by thousands of people, including nearly all the newly arrived soldiers, who all seem struck with wonder and admiration at the loveliness of the landscape, and the imposing strength exhibited by the army of the Union. They thus go forward to their own share in the great work of defending and restoring the Government with a fresh impression of the magnificent Capitol which has been for so many years the repository of its archives and the seat of its legislation.

In this same letter of September 17, we get a glimpse of the man who was or soon would be Mr. Spofford's titular superior, John G. Stephenson, who had been appointed Librarian of Congress by President Lincoln on May 24, but who evidently found mere librarianship too dull an occupation in the stirring times of Civil War:

The 19th Indiana Regiment is the one which has suffered most hitherto, from chills and fever. No less than a hundred and fifty-six members of it were down at one time. Dr. J. G. Stephenson, late of Terre Haute, has generously devoted a large share of his time to these sufferers, a temporary hospital for whom has been established in the Patent Office . . . It is gratifying to know that the sickness in this regiment is now on the decrease.

The appointment of Dr. Stephenson was one of the minor spoils which accrued to the Republican Party by its capture of the national administration in the elections of 1860. The incumbent, John S. Meehan, is said to have been regarded as a Southern sympathizer, and he had certainly committed the crime of being a Democrat, for he had been appointed over

thirty years earlier by Andrew Jackson as a reward for his journalistic services. His chief assistant, E. B. Stelle, who, with one brief interruption, had been with the Library since 1827, was another rascal to be turned out. Stephenson, it will be remembered, had been practising medicine in Terre Haute, and was a friend or useful ally of the Indiana Republican leaders, Senator Henry S. Lane and Caleb B. Smith, who was now Lincoln's Secretary of the Interior. If Dr. Stephenson is not known to have done the Library of Congress any particular good, at least he was not permitted to do it lasting harm, and he did, perhaps unwittingly, take care to provide a capable and assiduous second and substitute in the person of Ainsworth R. Spofford. The nature of the association between Stephenson and Spofford remains undetermined; Henry Blackwell declares that Stephenson was a fellow member of the Literary Club of Cincinnati, but his name does not appear in the comprehensive catalog of its members which was published in 1903. There is, however, a Reuben H. Stephenson among the original group of founders of the Club in 1849, all intimates of Spofford's; Dr. Stephenson's father was named Reuben, and the Club member, if not he, may at least have been a relative. At any rate, in the course of September 1861 Stephenson secured Spofford's appointment to the position of First Assistant Librarian from which Stelle had been ejected. Since 1856 the salary of \$1,800 had been attached to this post; that of the Librarian was not much greater, \$2,160.

Blackwell tells us that Spofford had been negotiating for the purchase of "the antiquarian bookstore in Boston" when this appointment was offered. It was presumably not the salary which attracted him, for he was evidently possessed of some capital—the firm of Truman and

Spofford was liquidated about this time—but the nature of the position and the work, and the future possibilities which they opened up. Furthermore, Spofford did not immediately terminate his connection with the *Cincinnati Commercial*. He had naturally to give up his daily telegraphic dispatch, but his position at the center of the Government, and the opportunities for observation which it gave, enabled him to remain a valuable correspondent, and Sigma's "Letters from Washington" continued to appear, usually several times a week, in the *Commercial*. On November 16, 1861, he brought the Library itself into his letter (the passage is actually from the second letter of a group of three written from Washington on successive days and published together; the first is signed SIGMA, the second SPERO, and the third, on the countryside about Washington, RURALIST, but there can be no serious doubt that all three are from the same pen and by Spofford). He brought it into his letter with a phrase which is the key to his acceptance of the position, and of his whole subsequent action when he had fallen heir to the librarianship: "The subject of newspapers suggests a mention of the national library." He did not suppose that anyone would take him to be referring to anything else than the Library of Congress, which name he does not even trouble to use. For him, as soon as he has entered its service, the Library of Congress is the National Library and the National Library is the Library of Congress. He goes on to indicate that the new broom is engaged in cleaning up a rather untidy accumulation, implying a degree of neglect in the Meehan administration:

The subject of newspapers suggests a mention of the national library. It has just been undergoing thorough overhauling and rearranging. Books which heretofore have lain undisturbed under the accumulated dust of many years, have been



cleaned and assigned places of fair accessibility. A new supplemental catalogue is being prepared, and a decided innovation will be made upon the idea that dust, confusion and neglect about a library, comport with the spirit of literature and *book-worming*. In view of the crowded condition of the room now occupied for a library, it is truly surprising that more ample accommodations have not been provided in the immense pile of buildings constituting our National Capitol. Did the architect only consider that it was for the occupancy of rude Congressmen, who in sprawling over the spacious and elegant apartments provided for their use, would show the world how common they can make them?

The last comment on the political manners of 1861 will doubtless explain why the new servant of Congress did not content himself with his usual *alias*, but retired behind the new one of "Spero".

The idea of the Library of Congress as the National Library, to which Mr. Spofford here gave expression, was one which he would preach in season and out for the next thirty-seven years, to Democrats and to Republicans, to politicians and to ordinary citizens, to learned assemblies and to Capitol sightseers alike. There was of course nothing new about the idea, but no one had hitherto taken hold of it with such firmness and fervor, or developed its consequences with such perfect clarity, or made himself its unrelenting servant. In the end, after manifold frustrations, hopes deferred, and tedious delays, all that he had foreseen and all for which he had labored were to be accomplished. It is for this reason that if anyone deserves the name of Apostle of the National Library, it is Ainsworth Rand Spofford. What was achieved in 1897 was envisaged in 1861—when the Nation was engulfed in fratricidal horror. In time of war, prepare for peace. Mr. Spofford never, so far as we are aware, made any large-scale or systematic exposition of all that was present to his mind in the concept of a National Library. But nearly everything that he published or did

from this time forth was a commentary upon this concept, and as we proceed we shall cite many of his brief and partial presentations of the idea, and touch upon the constituent elements as they became a part of his practical program.

We may pause to look for a moment at the institution whose employ he entered in 1861, and of which he became the director something more than three years later. Reduced to its essentials, the Library of Congress in 1861 consisted of two rooms, seven people, and 63,000 books. It required indeed the eye of faith to equate this shoestring outfit with the British Museum, the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg, but such an eye was precisely what Ainsworth Spofford brought to his job. The rooms comprised a separate apartment for the Law Library, after 1860 in the old Supreme Court room on the east side of the basement, and the Main Hall of the Library, on the west front of the central portion of the Capitol, directly off and easily accessible from the Rotunda under the dome. It will be recalled that the principal room was a good one, new, commodious, fireproof, and quite handsome for a construction of its date. The door was locked after the horse had been stolen: after the disastrous fire of December 24, 1851, which destroyed half of the entire collections and two-thirds of Mr. Jefferson's books, the Library room was reconstructed out of iron, copper and stone.

The seven persons on the staff of the Library consisted of the Librarian himself—normally absent at this period—three assistant librarians, one messenger, and two laborers. Since the younger Meehan—C. H. W. Meehan was the only member of the "professional" staff who was not dispossessed by the Republican invasion, and continued to serve until 1872—was on duty in the Law Library downstairs,

this left just two librarians regularly on hand in the main room during the War. The Law Library was under the control, not of the Joint Library Committee but of the Supreme Court, and Chief Justice Roger B. Taney would have had no motive to replace a deserving Democratic incumbent by a black Republican. These seven men received in salaries the princely total of \$9,000, ranging from the absentee Librarian's \$2,160, through the assistants' \$1,800 and the messenger's \$1,440, to \$500 for the laborers who "did the chars." The Library's entire budget in 1861 amounted to \$17,000, the remaining \$8,000 being divided into \$2,000 for the purchase of law books, \$5,000 for other books, and \$1,000 for contingent expenses.

As for the collection, while it was the largest of the nine libraries then maintained in Washington by various branches of the Government, it nevertheless required a Spoffordian faith to regard it as the National Library of the United States of America. Of the Jeffersonian basis, but a third remained, and that third largely confined to a certain range of classification. After the disaster of 1851, the shelves had been somewhat hastily and unsystematically replenished, and rather with what the book sellers had to offer than with any planned body of acquisitions. There were some rarities but the presence or absence in the collection of any particular rare or unusual item was quite unpredictable and apparently accidental. In one respect the collection departed very radically from any reasonable concept of a National Library: the holdings in Americana were neither large nor distinguished. The best developed section was naturally the separately housed Law Library; in the *Catalogue of the Library of Congress* printed in this year, 1861, the law chapters occupy some 250 out of 1400 pages, and a much greater proportion of their entries are for large sets. By and large, the verdict of

William Dawson Johnston is just: "The Library was a good reference library for the average legislator, though it was little more, and aimed to be little more." The printed catalog just mentioned was a complete repertory of its contents but, as Spofford pointed out, its arrangement involved 179 distinct alphabets and being otherwise unindexed it was not therefore of great service as a finding instrument.

The war years, with Spofford in limited authority, were necessarily ones of limited progress. Nevertheless, what Spofford succeeded in accomplishing with the means at his disposal was sufficiently remarkable. While the turmoil raged without, attendance at the Library was small, being largely limited to Members of Congress, and this gave some opportunity for concentrated and constructive effort. "Mr. Spofford was primarily a collector of books," says Johnston, and the Library began to grow faster than it had ever grown before. With no increase either of the appropriations or of the Library's privileges, but merely by superior attention and energy the collections were increased by nearly one-third in four years and grew from 63,000 to 82,000 volumes. In fact, the problem of adequate space began now for the first time to rear its head. With, as we have seen, hardly more than two working librarians, he not only kept up the annual catalogs of new accessions, but put through the press in 1864 a complete catalog of the Library based on an entirely new system of arrangement as compared with those issued between 1815 and 1861. This was an alphabetical catalog by authors, and was the only such printed catalog ever to be completed by the Library of Congress. It was also the first general catalog to be manufactured by the Government Printing Office, which had been producing the annual supplements since 1862. Mr. Spofford included a prefatory note which,



after referring to these supplements, continued:

To consolidate all these catalogues into a single volume, and to facilitate reference by reducing the multifarious alphabets of former general catalogues to one alphabetical arrangement, is the object of the present volume.

All former general catalogues of this Library have been arranged upon a system of classification prepared by Thomas Jefferson, and based upon Lord Bacon's division of knowledge. This classification, however well adapted, in some respects, to a small library, like that of Mr. Jefferson when adopted in 1815 as the basis of the present collection, is wholly unsuited to the necessities of readers consulting a large library. It was never designed by its author as a bibliographical system, but rather as a scientific arrangement of the various branches of human knowledge. No further illustration of its defects need be given than the fact that in the last catalogue of the Library of Congress the titles are distributed through a series of one hundred and seventy-nine distinct alphabets, arranged in an arbitrary sequence, and without an index. Few readers have the leisure and fewer still the inclination, to study the intricacies of such a system of classification. In abandoning it for a more simple method, the officers of the Library are assured that they have consulted the convenience as well as the wishes of Congress, and of other frequenters of the Library.

In the arrangement of any catalogue of books, the chief desideratum, next to accuracy of description, is facility of reference, and to this end all minor considerations should be sacrificed. This volume embraces the present contents of the Library, arranged in all cases under the names of the authors, when known . . .

Beyond this substantial bibliographical achievement, the physical conditions of the Library were well looked after during these years. The ventilation of the Library was improved, and in 1863 both a new roof and a new floor, of black and white marble which would render unnecessary the use of those dust-catching carpets, were laid.

In the last months of 1864 Dr. Stephen-son, evidently finding that he no longer needed the proceeds of his sinecure, resigned. We can only conjecture why

the succession went to Ainsworth Spofford, but it is reasonable to suppose that it could hardly have taken place without the support of the Joint Committee on the Library. Now from a surviving letter it appears that the member of this Committee second in seniority, Senator Reverdy Johnson, of Maryland, had already pledged his support to Charles Lanman, formerly Librarian of the Interior Department and of the House of Representatives, and a literary man of sorts. From this we may perhaps infer that Spofford had the suffrage of the Chairman of the Committee, Senator Jacob Collamer of Vermont, who had briefly been Postmaster General in the Taylor Cabinet, and so jocularly claimed the title of "man of letters," who was described by a Vermont colleague, shortly after his death in November 1865, as "well versed in history and standard literature" and "a very diligent and conscientious student of the books he loved." We may perhaps also infer that the majority of the Library Committee was acquainted with Spofford's conception of the Library of Congress as the National Library, was in agreement with it, and wished to cooperate with him in its practical development. Such an inference cannot be very far from correct if we consider the support which in succeeding years the Committee gave to Spofford's expanding, and gave, to all appearances, in a whole-hearted and unqualified manner. At all events, President Lincoln signed Ainsworth Rand Spofford's commission as Librarian of Congress on the last day of 1864, and he entered upon his new status a few days later.

The greatest factor in favor of the new Librarian and the institution in his charge was the fact that the War was at last obviously drawing to its close. The Nation and all its institutions, whether or not they would experience a new birth of

freedom, certainly stood upon the threshold of a new and vastly altered era, and it was obviously a time for taking long views and entering upon ambitious projects. It was in this spirit that the Librarian, the Library Committee, and the Congress proceeded to act. As the late Frederick W. Ashley pointed out in his essay of 1929, "Three Eras in the Library of Congress"—probably the most brilliant summary of Library of Congress history that has appeared—within the next sixty-four days the Library took a longer step forward toward its ultimate position among the libraries of the Nation and the world than it had in the sixty-four years since its foundation:

It was national in no sense except ownership—the nation owned it. But so far was it surpassed among American libraries in size, in quality, and in service performed, that in an article on American libraries published that year in *Harper's Monthly*, the Library of Congress was not mentioned! So matters stood with it on the last day of December, 1864; and there was nothing in its past that remotely presaged a future in any degree more notable. There was no apparent warrant for believing that its next sixty-four years would do more than repeat the era that, unknown to the world, was ending that day.

Within the next sixty-four days, however, the Library of Congress was visibly moving toward the point—now long since attained—at which it stood surpassed in size by no more than two libraries in the world [this was 1929] rendering an international service surpassed by none.

This forward movement was effected by two acts passed in the closing days of the session of Congress which opened before Spofford was appointed, on December 5, 1864, and was adjourned on March 3, 1865—the last day of President Lincoln's first term. The first, of March 2, was a portion of the General Appropriations Act, and, after providing a normal \$10,800 for the operation of the Library, continued:

For an enlargement of the library of congress, so as to include in two wings, built fire-proof, the space at either end of the present library, measuring about eighty feet in length by thirty

feet in width, in accordance with a plan to be approved by the committee on the library, one hundred and sixty thousand dollars, to be expended under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior.

Hitherto the average expenditure on the Library for all purposes had been some \$12,700 a year—and here was a total appropriation of \$170,800. The shelf-space of the Library was thereby approximately tripled, and the principle established that space would be provided for anticipated expansion. That this principle would ultimately take the Library out of the Capitol, and give it two large buildings of its own, could not immediately be foreseen. The act passed the following day, March 3, 1865, amended the existing copyright legislation by providing "that a printed copy of every book, pamphlet, map, chart, musical composition, print, engraving, or photograph, for which copyright shall be secured under said acts, shall be transmitted free of postage . . . to the library of congress at Washington for the use of said Library." Hereby was begun the perfection of the law of copyright in the interest of the National Library which would soon give it its most important means of regular and automatic accumulation, and constitute the very basis of its unique and national status.

These two enactments ushered in the *lustrum mirabile* of the Library of Congress, the extraordinary expansion, consolidation and reconstitution of 1865-70. In the number of books alone the increase of these five years was startling: at the beginning, 82,000 volumes; at their end, 237,000—if the space had tripled, so had the collections. Three other whole libraries or collections had been added to that in the Library room in 1865, and one of these, in that year, had not even been in the possession of the Government. Even more important was the fact that by 1870 the future was in large measure provided for,



so that the Library would automatically receive, through copyright and document exchange, a great proportion of the world's current literary production, and might henceforth devote its appropriation for increase to filling gaps, acquiring rarities, and rounding out the collections. Much remained to be done, and was done, after 1870, but only what was an obvious and indisputable extension of the principles which obtained by that year.

The first step in the expansion was to get the wings built. The space for them lay on the north and south of the existing Library room, but they must be built at right angles to that room, with their axes running east and west. The space which could be made use of turned out to be slightly less for each wing than for the main room, 95 by 30 feet for the wings as against 91 by 34 for the original Library. However, although the same general scheme of decoration was preserved, the wings were less ornamentally and more economically designed. They had three galleries above the main-floor alcoves, as against two in the main room, and each had 3,800 more linear feet of shelving than the main room. Mr. Spofford, looking forward in 1866 to their early completion, congratulated himself upon the prospective possession, with the Law Library room thrown in, of 26,148 feet of shelving, or space for 210,000 volumes; unfortunately, in five years he would have 237,000 books! The primary material, as in the case of the older room, was to be cast iron.

Mr. Spofford zealously pushed along the processes of construction and watched over their details with a solicitous care. At the end of May he addressed the President of the United States, now the Honorable Andrew Johnson, respectfully suggesting that six portraits of ex-Presidents of the United States be removed to the Executive Mansion, in order that the demolition of all the outer rooms of the

Library, preparatory to its enlargement, might proceed. On September 16, 1865, he admonished Benjamin B. French, the engineer in charge of the Capitol Extension, insisting that the substitution of an inferior for a superior material—freestone for marble—in the balustrade of the new stairway approaching the Library, would not do at all: "as the specifications clearly provide for a marble balustrade, and the contractors are bound to furnish it. I am unwilling to see such alteration made." Two days later he reported to Chairman Collamer the result of a visit of inspection to New York, where he found the casting of the new ironwork for the wings proceeding so rapidly as to ensure the completion of the north wing by the end of the year. On February 13, 1866, he descended on Edward Clark, the Architect of the Capitol Extension, in indignation at the shelving which he found being inserted in the north wing: the specifications had called for the finishing of the tops of all the shelves and the inner sides of all cases with enamelled or polished iron, to preclude the scratching of the books' leather covers which had gone on in the Main Library shelving of ordinary planed iron; but alas! the shelves delivered were neither polished nor enamelled.

. . . I shall insist upon a strict compliance with the specifications, as it is an essential condition of the utility and completeness of the Library Extension, and it is my duty as the custodian of the books, and the organ of the Joint Library Committee of Congress, whose approval of the specifications is an integral part of the law, to take care that no work of an inferior quality to that called for in the specifications shall go in to the new library.

On March 3, he pointed out to Mr. Clark that an opening had just been made between the upper gallery of the unfinished north wing of the Capitol inviting marauders to make off with Library property at night; and he requested that the incomplete wing be immediately furnished with

a lockable door. Deliberately the work moved toward completion, and in his first annual report, addressed on December 3, 1866 to the chairman of the Joint Committee, the Honorable John A. J. Creswell, the Librarian was able to state that the end was in sight:

The progress of the new library extension during the vacation of Congress, though not so rapid as was expected at the commencement of the work, has resulted in the completion of one entire wing, measuring ninety-five feet in length by thirty feet in width, which is now opened and fully occupied with books. It is expected that the remaining wing will be completed and occupied during the coming month. . . . The fact that the whole library is now impregnably fire-proof, being constructed of solid iron material throughout, and that future accessions to its stores, as well as the present accumulation of valuable works, are secure from a casualty which has twice consumed our national library, is a matter for sincere congratulation.

This was the first published annual report of the Librarian of Congress. All earlier reports, when they were made, had remained in manuscript in the files. Ordered to be printed on December 20, 1866, it was issued as Senate Miscellaneous Document No. 6 of the 39th Congress, 2d Session, and bore the title, "Letter from the Librarian of Congress transmitting his First Annual Report." It was submitted in compliance with the instructions of the Joint Committee, which had evidently been issued at the previous session, and may well have been printed on the initiative of Mr. Spofford himself. A modest document of five printed pages and one blank page, it would appear very slight beside this, its latest successor, but it is nevertheless the lineal ancestor and founder of the dynasty, and marks another stage in the progress of the National Library: henceforth all might read, once a year, of the growth and development of the Library of Congress, and the Librarian's suggestions as to desirable measures. In Mr. Spofford's hands the annual report

of the Library could never have caused the prospective reader to groan, for the longest one, that for the year ending December 1, 1872, went only to eleven pages, and most of the later ones were very jejune and brief indeed. After 1869 the reports did not appear with a congressional document number during Spofford's regime, and with that for 1875 they became reports for the calendar year rather than for the year ending December 1. The change over to reports for the fiscal year ending June 30, as is now the practice, was not made until after Spofford's retirement as Librarian.

Mr. Spofford now had a substantially enlarged plant, enough to take care of increase at the old rates for a considerable time to come. There could be no further opportunity for spatial expansion without extensive reconstructions of the Capitol; such additional room as might be found could only be for storage. But fresh developments brought about a new and wholly unprecedented rate of increase; the new space was devoured almost as soon as it came into being. Within a few more years Mr. Spofford's fine new library was jam-packed, and books, maps, prints, and other materials went on pouring in at a rate that continued to accelerate. Primarily from want of *lebensraum*, and secondarily from a staff increased too tardily to keep up with the altered material basis of the collections, the Library of Congress became increasingly a matter of hand-to-mouth expedients. One after another of its normal functions kept breaking down and virtually disappearing, little remaining but the inescapable ones of copyright, acquisitions, and "legislative reference". And the latter, the furnishing of information and relevant publications to Members of Congress, failed to wither and die only because of the extraordinary memory of Ainsworth Spofford himself. In a sense this quality, which was the



admiration of his contemporaries, was a national misfortune, since if he had been less able to find what was wanted in the chaos which surrounded him, the Congress might not improbably have been moved to take speedier and more effective steps toward a more orderly state of things.

The second of the two acts of March 1865 which set the Library of Congress upon the right road was one amending the copyright law, which we have already quoted in part. It once more integrated the Library of Congress with the copyright system of the United States, initiated a process of improvement in the system itself, and its perfection so far as a benefit to the Library of Congress was concerned was completed in a little over five years. This copyright act of 1865 evidently took its origin in a proposal to extend the benefits of copyright to photographs and negatives, which is the subject of the first section. The bill originated in the Senate, and was reported by Mr. Cowan of Pennsylvania from the Committee on Patents and the Patent Office. When it came on the floor, Mr. Sumner of Massachusetts wanted it printed, considering that he and some of his colleagues knew too little of its provisions. At this point (it was Washington's Birthday, 1865) Mr. Collamer arose:

I will say to the gentleman, which may perhaps relieve his mind on this subject, that the Committee on the Library have had this bill before them and have examined and approved it. It provides for including photographs in the copyright laws; and all the rest of it is merely for carrying into effect what used to be the law formerly, that one copy of all these publications shall be sent to the Library.

Mr. Sumner was not appeased, but the bill nevertheless passed at once without having been printed, and shortly afterward passed the House without further discussion. We may infer from this that when the proposal to expand the copy-

right law came before the Committee on Patents, Spofford, Collamer, and the Library Committee saw their opportunity to restore to the Library of Congress the privilege of copyright deposits which it had shared with the Smithsonian Institution between 1846 and 1859, but had lost in the latter year. Cowan and the Patents Committee had evidently been willing to expand their bill in this sense, but since the Library of Congress clauses were somewhat in the nature of a rider, Collamer was not eager to have them come up for discussion, and did his best to keep Charles Sumner from causing a delay which might have precisely that effect. Nevertheless, the new act was not precisely what Collamer represented it to be, a reenactment of "what used to be the law formerly." The revolutionary element in the act of 1865, so far as the Library of Congress was concerned, was the one involving a penalty for non-compliance with the obligation to deposit. Mr. Spofford and the Library Committee had evidently put their heads together and evolved the following provisions, which now constituted the third and fourth sections of the act in question:

SEC. 3. And be it further enacted, That if any proprietor of a book, pamphlet, map, chart, musical composition, print, engraving, or photograph, for which a copyright shall be secured as aforesaid, shall neglect to deliver the same pursuant to the requirements of this act, it shall be the duty of the librarian of congress to make demand thereof in writing, at any time within twelve months after the publication thereof; and in default of the delivery thereof within one month after the demand shall have been made, the right of exclusive publication secured to such proprietor under the acts of congress respecting copyright shall be forfeited.

SEC. 4. And be it further enacted, That in the construction of this act the word "book" shall be construed to mean every volume and part of a volume, together with all maps, prints or other engravings belonging thereto; and shall include a copy of any second or subsequent edition which

shall be published with any additions, whether the first edition of such book shall be published before or after the passing of the act.

Failure to deposit in the Library of Congress could now result in the forfeiture of copyright, but each individual instance thereof had to be detected by the Librarian and brought by him to the attention of the defaulting author or other proprietor. The final clause ruled out all possibility of token deposits, and made sure that the Library would receive a complete copy or set of each publication claiming the privilege.

The new law was of immediate service to the Library; during 1866, the only complete year in which it was in force in an unamended state, it brought in 836 volumes, as against 5,603 acquired by purchase, 572 pamphlets and periodicals, 386 pieces of music, 170 engravings and photographs, and 32 maps. This was a beginning, but the law as it stood was far from giving complete satisfaction to the Librarian. His first thought for its improvement lay in a strengthening of the penalty, and this expedient he brought to the attention of the Library Committee in his first annual report:

The undersigned is of the opinion, founded upon experience, that the benefits of the law to the Congressional Library will depend greatly upon the means provided for its enforcement, and the vigilance with which it is administered. Comparatively few owners of copyrights, outside of the leading publishing houses, comply with the requisition of the law without notice. These notices, to the number of several hundreds, have been regularly served upon delinquents whenever the undersigned could obtain authentic evidence of a copyright having been issued. In most cases, the requirements of the law have been complied with after notice, although there are many exceptions. The provisions of the English law of copyright, which are much more exacting than our own (requiring the deposit of five copies of each work instead of one), prescribe a penalty of five pounds sterling, and the value of

the books withheld . . . This provision is found to be amply sufficient to secure a general compliance with the law. A similar modification of the present statute is respectfully suggested to the consideration of the committee, as also a provision by which books and other publications may be transmitted through the mails, free of charge, to the Library of Congress.

Seldom can a law have corresponded more exactly to the original proposal than did the amendment which the Library Committee put through Congress within two and a half months, or by February 18, 1867. The penalty of five pounds sterling was even converted into twenty-five dollars!

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That every proprietor of a book, pamphlet, map, chart, musical composition, print, engraving, or photograph, for which a copyright shall have been secured, who shall fail to deliver to the library of congress at Washington, a printed copy of every such book, pamphlet, map, chart, musical composition, print, engraving, or photograph, within one month after publication thereof, shall, for every such default, be subject to a penalty of twenty-five dollars, to be collected, by the librarian of congress, in the name of the United States, in any district or circuit court of the United States within the jurisdiction of which the delinquent may reside or be found.

A second clause marked the beginning of "penalty label mail" addressed to the Library; all items intended for deposit might be sent "to the Librarian of Congress, by mail free of postage, provided the words 'Copyright matter' be plainly written or printed on the outside of the package containing the same;" and it was made the duty of postmasters to see to it that such mail reached its destination.

The increased stringency of the law was immediately reflected in the increased volume of copyright deposits. This may be illustrated by setting side by side the receipts for 1866 and those for 1868, the



first complete year in which the amendment operated:

	1866	1868
Number of volumes of books...	836	1,682
Number of pamphlets and periodicals.....	572	1,421
Number of pieces of music.....	386	1,561
Number of maps.....	32	80
Number of engravings and photographs.....	170	347
Total number of articles..	1,996	5,091

1868 was a subnormal year with respect to volumes purchased, so that it is best to compare copyright deposits with purchases for the following year, 1869, when 6,180 volumes were bought as against 1,831 from copyright. The total received from all sources was 11,262 volumes, so that copyright, if not yet the primary, was yet an important and regular element in the Library's growth. Still, however, the Librarian was not satisfied, and cast about for further means of tightening the system. He gave expression to his discontents in his Annual Report for 1868. Since the amendment went into effect, he said, "there has been received a largely increased proportion of American publications."

No instance of a necessity for the enforcement of the penalty against delinquent publishers has yet occurred. Yet the statute referred to is so far from being a self-acting one, that multitudes of publications in all parts of the country are never furnished to the library until after the official demand provided for in the law has been made. This requires incessant vigilance, not only to obtain authentic evidence of all copyrights issued in the numerous judicial districts of the United States, but to transmit the requisite notice to all delinquent proprietors of copyrights, and to record the results. With the utmost diligence it is found impracticable to secure for the library all copyright publications that are issued. A large proportion of American publications are copyrighted by persons other than the publishers, and the residence of such persons it is frequently impossible to ascertain. Other works are issued in places remote from the great cities, and it is found that access to the copyright records of

several States (especially of such as make no returns to the Patent Office in Washington) is difficult and expensive. Still, the undersigned has reason to believe that nearly all important publications, and a proportion exceeding three-fourths of all publications copyrighted under the law, are received at this library. . . . Had such a provision been enforced since the foundation of the government, and the publications thus received treasured up, as they now are, in a fire-proof repository, we should possess a library of the United States representing the complete product of the American mind in every department of science and literature. That no such provision of law has ever been actually enforced, until within the past three or four years, must remain a source of permanent regret to all who are aware of the perishable character of the mass of books, and the value of completeness of materials to any research.

Within less than two years Congress had passed legislation to ensure that henceforth the complete product of the American mind should be treasured up, so far as the copyright system could possibly effect this end; and if since 1870 "a library of the United States" has not been in existence, it is difficult to know what object this legislation could have had. The great copyright law of 1870, as we may well call it, since it not only brought simplicity and harmony into a sprawling and chaotic system, but put the Library of Congress forever upon a uniquely national basis, did not take its origin, like the previous amendment, in Mr. Spofford's reports, and how far he was a participant in shaping its provisions, we are at present left to conjecture.

It was, by title, "An Act to revise, consolidate, and amend the Statutes relating to Patents and Copyrights;" its first 84 sections dealt exclusively with patents and trade-marks; and it made its bow as a bill reported from the House Committee on Patents by Thomas A. Jenckes, a Representative from Rhode Island, on April 7, 1870. Mr. Jenckes was its principal pilot and defender on the floor of the House, and with only seven

minutes remaining to him of the morning session of April 14, gave so magisterial an exposition justifying its copyright provisions that, considering the importance of this law as a basic charter of the Library of Congress, we must quote his remarks at some length:

First, let it be understood what the law is. Under the present system a person wishing to procure a copyright and to protect his publication must go to the office of the clerk of the district court for the district in which he resides, there file a copy of the title-page, get a certificate of having filed such a copy, and after the publication of his book send a copy to the clerk's office for transmission to the Patent Office. In course of time it is to be expected that the clerk of the district court would transmit the book to the Patent Office; but it is not always done. It is proposed that the clerk's office should cease to be the place of registration, and that the title-pages of books which are to be copyrighted shall be sent at once to the Library of Congress, and when published that copies of each publication shall also be sent to the Library of Congress.

The result of the existing law has been to place in the store-rooms of the Department of the Interior from thirty to forty thousand volumes, beyond the reach of consultation, and which with difficulty can be found even with the most diligent inquiry. Some of them, and the greater portion, are in a room accessible only by clambering up a narrow staircase and over an archway—a room which has no light, and where, if the books are to be examined, they must be examined by candle-light. Besides, they are imperfectly catalogued. Since 1850 these publications have only been taken care of when Congress has made appropriations for copyright clerks. Sometimes no such appropriation has been made, and the consequence is that the books sent to the Patent Office during such periods have remained there in the original packages, without having been in the least taken care of or catalogued. It is proposed by this bill, when we change the place of registration to the Library of Congress, to transfer also to the Library of Congress, where it can be exhibited and taken care of, all this mass of American literature now stored away in the recesses of the Interior Department.

These books should be so arranged and catalogued as to be accessible to all. There are many valuable works there, and no doubt a great deal of trash; but still all of them have value in a his-

torical point of view. Even the school-books showing the progress of education in this country will have some value to some persons. With the transfer of these books to the Library it will place them where they will be convenient of access. With these books, and those placed there hereafter for protection of copyrights, the Library of Congress will possess properly arranged and catalogued complete copies of all works published in America. Since the passage of the law in 1865 it has been required that one copy should be sent to the Library of Congress, and the Library has a tolerable collection of American literature since that time; but under the provisions of this bill two copies of each publication are to be placed in the Library of Congress.

This is no burden upon the publisher. The certificate of registration costs him but a dollar. That and two copies of the book protect his copyright for forty-two years. It is less than is required by the laws of other countries. In Great Britain five copies are required; and the consequence is that the British Museum contains a complete library of all the copyright publications since the passage of the law . . .

These are the changes in the copyright law. The result will be to give one place of registration, one certifying officer as to all acts done under the copyright law, one place of deposit for all books copyrighted. And it does not increase the expense, but rather diminishes it, as the publisher is not required to attend at the office of the district clerk, and is not subjected to the hazard of sending his publication to that office and to the incidents of injury from requiring a thing to be done by three persons which might as well be done by one.

And I will state this fact, which is important, that in making this transfer we have consulted with the officers of the Department of the Interior, and they not only assent to the transfer, but are glad of it. Not having a proper or convenient place in that building for keeping possession of the books and records, and needing the space now occupied by them for other purposes belonging to the more appropriate business of the Department, they willingly surrender this duty to the Librarian of Congress. In the Library of Congress there is room for all these books, and they will be useful in that place, whereas they are useless now. They can be catalogued by skilled persons, and will be well taken care of, and the business relating to copyrights will be hereafter well and thoroughly performed, because the person who has charge of the Library of Congress is by reason of his office, and from being required



to purchase books, in constant communication with all the publishers of the United States, and he can enforce the law in every instance without delay and without expense. There is another fact which the committee considered to be of importance in recommending this change. . . . The books that are required to be deposited in the district courts throughout the country are frequently lost or mislaid and never reach the depository in the Patent Office. The Librarian and the Commissioner of Patents both informed me that there were several clerks' offices from which no regular return is received, and that there is one from which no return has been received for seven years. And in other districts where the business is large and there are numerous registrations the Librarian of Congress, in order to keep up his own collection according to the law of 1865, has been obliged personally to go to the clerks' offices, examine their records, and make the transcripts for the purpose of performing his duties under the law.

At this point, when the speaker called time and the House adjourned for lunch, Mr. Jenckes must have been somewhat out of breath. But he had clearly exposed, in his seven minutes, the mind of Congress upon this law: it aimed to assemble a complete body of American literature not in cold storage but properly serviced for general use; and it equated the future position of the Library of Congress in the American system with that of the British Museum in the British system.

In the following week, the House debate of April 20 brought into view another facet of the new legislation. By the altered basis of the copyright system the Librarian of Congress ceased to be a mere servant of the legislative body and became a national officer, with responsibilities to the whole public. John A. Peters of Maine therefore rose on this day and moved to add at the end of section 86:

And the Librarian of Congress shall receive a yearly compensation of \$3,500, to commence when this act shall take effect.

Once again we are compelled to quote at considerable length because Mr. Peters' remarks are not only exceptionally reveal-

ing as to the relations between Spofford and the Library Committee and informative as to the general state of the Library at this period, but constitute, with the remarks of Mr. Palmer which followed, the only contemporary statement on the status and importance of the Librarian's position:

I offer this amendment in behalf of the Committee on the Library, not from any official action, because they have not been able to get together since this bill was reported to the House, but from having learned their individual views expressed to me. They will probably speak for themselves before the amendment shall be acted on.

There has been a sentiment for some time among individual members of Congress that the compensation of the Librarian of Congress was insufficient. I have taken the trouble to make an analysis of the duties which he is called upon to perform under the law as it now stands, and also a brief analysis of the duties which he will be called upon to perform under this bill should it become a law.

The duties of the Librarian of Congress, with his present salary of \$2,500 a year, are, first, the constant oversight the year round of a library now numbering nearly 200,000 volumes, much the largest library in the United States; second, the care of from ten to twelve thousand new books added every year, all of which have to be collated, catalogued, bound, and assigned to their proper places, under one responsible eye; third, the careful reading of several thousand catalogues annually of auction sales and books stocks in Europe and America, to secure eligible and economical purchases; fourth, the vigilant watching of all new issues of the press and careful selection of books for purchase; fifth, the preparation and printing of full catalogues of the Library, involving careful critical revision of titles in most of the languages of Europe. Ours is the only Government Library in the world which issues annual printed catalogues. Sixth, the receipt and care of copyright publications to the number of from four to six thousand annually, and the issue of over one thousand requisitions to proprietors of delinquent copyrights. The enforcement of this law requires much time and incessant vigilance. Seventh, the care and oversight of an exchange of all public documents and publications of bureaus and departments with foreign Governments for their publications; eighth, the furnishing of immediate information in all departments to Congress and to the public at call.

Under this bill, if it shall become a law, the duties of the Librarian of Congress will be increased by making him the responsible register of copyrights for the whole United States, besides transferring to his care the large library of copyright matter now accumulated at the Patent Office. This will require the issue of from four to six thousand copyright certificates per annum, and he is also required to give an additional bond in the sum of \$5,000 for the payment of all fees received into the Treasury.

Considering the complex and responsible character of his other duties, and the fact that he is required by the steady exactions of business to be at his post of labor the year round, while the officers of the House and Senate are mostly relieved from labor during the recess of Congress, it would seem but fair that the Librarian's compensation should be at least \$3,500 per annum. . . . No advance, except the twenty per cent. increase common to all has been made in his salary in fifteen years past, though the contents of the Library have been quadrupled and the labors of the Librarian multiplied in a still greater ratio. The salary of the principal librarian of the British Museum is £1,200, or \$6,000. That of the superintendent of the Boston Public Library is \$3,000. I have a table which shows the salaries now paid to the principal and some of the subordinate officers of the Senate and House . . .

As to the fitness of the Librarian of Congress for the place he occupies nobody can have a doubt who is at all acquainted with him. Mr. Spofford could to-day leave the situation which he now holds and obtain a much larger compensation in some other place. But he has so much love for the business, he has such an enthusiasm and desire to fill properly the place which he now occupies, that the additional salary to be obtained in other places has not been a temptation to him. And from an intimate knowledge of this officer, and with some knowledge of his private relations, I can say to the House that he has hard work to eke out a support of his family with the sum of \$2,500 which he now receives.

There is a provision in this bill which, if it shall become a law, will save to the Government annually from four to six thousand dollars. The Librarian is to collect one dollar upon each copyright. I guaranty that when this becomes his duty that vigilant officer will collect the fee in every case. About five thousand copyrights . . . are issued annually. The fees paid upon the issue of those copyrights are now received by the clerks of the district courts where the copyrights are taken out. Although by law the clerks of those

courts are required to render an account to the Treasury of the United States, I believe that in all the districts the judges have allowed the clerks to retain the fees collected in that way as payment for their services in that behalf. Now, the provision of this bill is that all this business shall be under the supervision of the Librarian of Congress. The provision in reference to these fees is a stringent one. If the Librarian is to be subjected to this arduous duty, and to collect for the benefit of the Treasury from four to six thousand dollars annually, of which the Treasury does not now receive a single cent, I ask that this officer, whose compensation is now so small, and who now discharges his duties with such great efficiency, shall be allowed for the labors already imposed on him, and those additional labors to be imposed by this bill, the sum of \$1,000 additional, when he will save thousands of dollars to the Government annually. It appears to me that no member of the House ought to vote against this proposition.

Aaron F. Stevens, of New Hampshire who represented the Patents Committee, agreed that the amendment would "undoubtedly prove to be a measure of retrenchment and reform in the interest of the Government," and Frank W. Palmer of Iowa, like Mr. Peters a member of the Library Committee, made a briefer statement which in the main recapitulated the latter's points, and concluded that, "Considering the complex character of his office, the salary of \$2,592 now paid the Librarian of Congress is inadequate, and far below the compensation received by officers of either House whose duties are, in the main, confined merely to the time of the sessions of Congress." Thereupon Mr. Peters' amendment was adopted by the House.

The Senate did not get around to considering the House's patent and copyright bill until June 24. The Senators made a considerable number of minor changes which necessitated a conference committee, but all differences were ultimately straightened out. One change that stuck was moved by Senator Timothy O. Howe of Wisconsin, the chairman of the Joint Library Committee: the salary of the Librarian was raised in the bill from



\$3,500 to \$4,000. Since a provision to this effect had already been inserted by the Senate in the appropriations bill, it was adopted without discussion, and was accepted by the conferees on the part of the House. Apart from this, the discussion of the copyright and Library sections of the bill were chiefly noteworthy as producing outbursts of senatorial humor. Senator Pomeroy of Kansas inquired whether Senator Willey, who was superintending the passage of the Senate's amendments, really meant to have statuary deposited in the post and sent by mail, and was answered that it was not the statue itself, but a photograph of it, which went by mail to the Library.

POMEROY: Very well; photographs can be sent by mail, I suppose.

WILLEY: The statue of the honorable Senator from Kansas could not go very well by mail.

Somewhat later Senator Roscoe Conkling arose to express his amazement that the Senate was so willing to extend the franking privilege to ordinary citizens—authors depositing their works—when it had so reluctantly and by so small a majority voted the privilege to its own members. Willey protested, "The Senator from New York need not shake the gory locks of that phantom at me; he cannot say I did it." The next speakers assumed that it was Conkling who might shake his locks, whereupon Mr. Carpenter of Wisconsin declared: "Another difficulty in the way of the Senator shaking his locks is that they curl too tight."

And so on July 8, 1870, it became law "that all records and other things relating to copyrights and required by law to be preserved, shall be under the control of the librarian of Congress," and that no one could claim a copyright upon any book, map, chart, dramatic or musical composition, engraving, cut, print, or photograph or negative thereof, without depositing in the mail, addressed to the

Librarian of Congress, two copies of the same within ten days of its publication. With changes in detail, but none in essence, such remains the copyright system of the United States, and such is the keystone of the Library of Congress as the National Library of the United States.

Of the changes effected by this great law that in the status of the Librarian has already been sufficiently emphasized. A corollary of this is the different nature of the business which he now transacted: a quasi-judicial officer, he was now called upon to make decisions which impinged upon points of law, in which process his only advisers were the members of the Library Committee. We may illustrate this point by quoting in full a brief letter of September 18, 1880, to a A. von Briesen, differing totally in its nature from any letter which might have proceeded from the Library of Congress during the first seventy years of its existence:

SEPTEMBER 18th 1880.

SIR:

In reply to yours of the 17th instant, regarding Mr. Garret Bergen's Almanac-Calendar, I have to say

1st. That I cannot regard these loose sheets as a book.

2nd. That even if it was conceded that they constituted a book within the meaning of the Copyright Law, the Applicant has put it out of my power to enter as one book by claiming copyright on each sheet as printed, from number one to number twelve inclusive. This printed claim of copyright on the distinctive sheets compels me to treat them just as musical compositions issued under one general title but claiming copyright on each. In this case the uniform rule of this office is that each must be entered separately.

3d. The applicant, Mr. Bergen, on applying for information as to the usage of this office in such cases was distinctly informed that separate entry of each sheet of the calendar would be requisite, if the claim of copyright were repeated on the successive numbers.

The certificate of Copyright is returned herewith as correct.

A. R. SPOFFORD

Mr. A. V. BRIESEN.

A further consequence of the law lay in the increasing absorption of the time of the Librarian and that of his staff by the duties of copyright registration. Almost at once, in his Annual Report of December 1, 1870, the Librarian was compelled to request two additional clerks to assist him with the copyright records and correspondence, which positions were included in the appropriation bill passed the following March 3. The Library had no special apartments available for the transaction of copyright business, and no proper space for the accommodation of copyright records. The business continued to grow as the country grew and literacy became more general, and it regularly outstripped the gradual growth of the Library's staff. By the end of Mr. Spofford's regime there were twelve clerks exclusively dedicated to copyright matters—the only departmentalized portion of the staff in 1897—but they were by no means adequate to the volume of business, which had grown from 11,512 entries in 1870 to 72,470 in 1896. It was not until after the retirement of Mr. Spofford and the transfer to the new building that a Register of Copyrights was appointed who could take over the crushing burden of the supervision of this business from the Librarian.

A corollary of the growing volume of business was the accelerated rate of growth in the collections. It was perceptible at once; even by the end of 1870 the copyright deposits had almost doubled in comparison with the preceding year—11,512 items against 6,680—and in 1871, the first whole year of operation, they rose to 19,826. By 1875 copyright deposits had come to be the largest source of acquisitions even in books—8,062 volumes as against 7,654 from purchase and 19,350 from all sources. In such respects as periodicals, musical scores, photographs, prints, and maps it was almost the only source.

But the Library of Congress in the Capitol was quite unsuited to become a repository for such materials. The three Library rooms had been designed merely to contain a collection of books. Specialized shelving or containers for these different classes of material, let alone separate apartments in which they might be segregated, were not available. Little could be done except to pile them up or store them in a more or less inaccessible condition, while the general confusion grew. Three hundred seventy-one thousand six hundred and thirty-six books, 257,153 periodicals, 289,617 pieces of music, 73,817 photographs, 95,249 prints, and 48,048 maps poured into the Capitol as copyright deposits between 1870 and 1896, and had to be accommodated some how: in heaps in the Library rooms, in unlet chambers above the Library, in vaults in the basement. Well might Spofford's successor report, from the spacious quarters of the new building at the end of 1897, that all but the books "came in such disorder that some time must elapse before it can be arranged."

Section 110 of the law of 1870 provided for the removal of all copyright accumulations from the Department of the Interior to the Library of Congress. Mr. Peters' speech has sufficiently indicated the conditions under which these deposits were stored at the Patent Office. The Librarian's Report for 1870 commented upon the significance of the transfer:

The rapid growth and present large extent of many of the great government libraries of Europe is attributable, in great degree, to the privilege of copyright publications. That the only library in the United States which possesses a national character should not at an earlier period have been made the repository of all American publications protected by the law of copyright, must remain a source of regret to the public. A part of the resulting loss will be supplied by the incorporation with the Library of the entire reserve of copyright books deposited under former laws at the State Department, and afterward at the De-



partment of the Interior. These publications are now being removed to the Capitol, under the law of the last session, and may be expected to add fully 25,000 volumes to this Library.

By the issue of Mr. Spofford's next report, for 1871, the transaction had been concluded, and the books on being counted found to number 23,070. This was the total national accumulation from eighty years of the district court system.

These accessions, although consisting largely of school-books and the minor literature of the last forty years, embrace many valuable additions to the story of American books, which it should be one object of a national library to render complete. Among them are the earliest editions of the works of well-known writers, and the number of duplicates of books already in the library, although large, bears a much smaller proportion to the whole number received than was apprehended. Most of the volumes received from this source are already catalogued.

The books from the Patent Office constituted the third large collection which had been incorporated with the Library of Congress in less than five years. From the 82,000 volumes of 1864 it was swollen to 236,846 volumes and 40,000 pamphlets, and the shelving of the new wings was completely taken up. In the absence of a radical solution, only hand-to-mouth expedients were available, and the Librarian sounded his first warning note on the subject of space in the Annual Report of this year, 1871.

Before leaving the subject of copyright, it may be well to note that the new law had brought back an old ghost to haunt poor Mr. Spofford. In the merry month of May, 1866, the mail had brought to the astonished Librarian a bottle of wine bitters, together with its accompanying label, upon which a copyright was claimed. Being disinclined to deposit the bottle in the collections, or its contents in himself, the Librarian of Congress sat him down and penned the following epistolary snort:

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

*Washington, May 12, 1866*

C. I. MASTEN, Esq.

*Kingston, Ulster Co. N. Y.*

SIR:

I have received your label "entered according to act of Congress for *Masten's Wine Bitters*, together with a bottle of said specific.

I have the honor to inform you that the act of Congress requiring Copyright matter to be transmitted to this Library does not include labels, nor is it my official duty to receive or to receipt for them, or for any goods or nostrums accompanying them. I enclose a copy of the law and remain

Your obedient servt

A. R. SPOFFORD

*Librarian*

P. S. If you desire a legal protection of your exclusive right to make and send any such article, you should apply to the Patent Office. The bottle awaits your orders.

But after the law of 1870 had centered all copyright business in the Library, Mr. Spofford found himself quite defenseless against the influx of labels and whatever the manufacturer might attach to them by way of illustration. As he himself put it, "under the vague designation of 'prints,' found in the law, it has always been customary to enter for copyright large numbers of printed labels, with or without pictorial embellishment, designed for use on cigar boxes, patent medicines, and other articles of manufacture." His annual reports for 1872 and 1873 are filled with indignant expostulations giving expression to his extreme distaste for handling these byproducts of commerce along with works of art and literature, and he ventured to expound the Constitution itself in order to demonstrate their irrelevance to the purpose of Copyright. "They are not 'writings,'" he declared, "they do not involve 'authorship,' and they are not calculated to promote the progress of science." A bill sponsored by the Joint Committee failed to get through in 1873, but one of the following year was more successful, and after August 1, 1874, the

registry of commercial labels was transferred to the Patent Office, as Spofford had suggested. The Librarian expressed his grateful relief in the Annual Report of December 1, 1874.

Having traced the perfecting of copyright so as bring into the Library all that was wanted and to exclude all that was not wanted, it is necessary now to return to the beginning of Mr. Spofford's administration and briefly recount the deposit in the Library of Congress of the library of the Smithsonian Institution, with its consequences for the future growth and scope of the Library. The Smithsonian is now (in 1946) celebrating its centennial, having been set up by an act of Congress in 1846, eight years after the estate of James Smithson (1765-1829) became available "to the United States of America, to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an Establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." That an illegitimate son of the Duke of Northumberland, whose experiences had evidently soured his disposition toward the ruling classes of his own country, should leave a cool half million dollars—which in 1838 was not yet small potatoes—for purely cultural purposes to the Government of the United States, was in itself a fact so amazing that it required some time for legislators to adjust their minds to it. The delay was not really harmful, for it enabled the original building of the Institution to be built out of the accumulation of interest on the fund, and the fund itself to be reserved for the expenses of operation. Furthermore, the object contemplated by the bequest, "an Establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men," was so general in its terms as to require much thought and discussion concerning the precise activities in which it should be embodied. Various ideas

were put forward in the course of the congressional debates, and the result which emerged in the act of 1846 might be termed a compromise by inclusion. There was to be constructed a building without unnecessary ornament, which should house a geological and mineralogical cabinet, a chemical laboratory, a library, a gallery of art, and lecture rooms. "All objects of art and of foreign and curious research," and all objects of natural history, plants, and mineralogical specimens being the property of the Government in Washington, were to be concentrated within its walls. The Board of fifteen Regents, which included the Vice President and the Chief Justice of the United States, were to appoint a suitable person as secretary of the Institution, and he was, in addition to his other duties, to discharge those of librarian and keeper of the museum, for which purpose he might employ assistants. That the Librarian's duties would be substantial was ensured by the provision of an annual appropriation, not exceeding an average of \$25,000, out of the interest on the fund, "for the gradual formation of a library composed of valuable works pertaining to all departments of human knowledge." This last function of the Institution had been emphasized on the floor of the Senate by Rufus Choate of Massachusetts, on January 8, 1845. He called for a yearly expenditure "for the purchase of a great national library—not to be chosen by a mere *biblio-maniac*—not by a man who should waste it upon mere curiosities of literature and musty manuscripts, of no intrinsic value—but a man of sound sense and learning." By James Smithson's bequest, Senator Choate pointed out, "a great, a providential, an extraordinary and peculiarly happy and appropriate facility—an opportunity that never would, in all human probability, occur again—now presented itself of accomplishing



what was so ardently desired—the formation of a national library in the New World second to none in the Old World.” When Senator Tappan, of Ohio, objected that Congress and the departments already had a number of libraries, and that there was no need for another general library in Washington, he was answered by Senator James Alfred Pearce, of the Library Committee, who declared that the government libraries were indispensable for official use in their several locations and could not be transferred for public use as a national library, but that by carrying out Choate’s suggestion, “a great national library, worthy of the country and of the donor,” might be created.

It is manifest that the Congress intended the library of the Smithsonian Institution to be a national library, but this does not mean that they thereby denied this status to the Library of Congress. In fact the coupling of the Smithsonian and the Library of Congress in the pious wish—for such, in the absence of any provision for enforcement, it was, rather than an effective law—that each might receive a copy of every copyrighted book suggests that there was now, at least *in posse*, two national libraries. Within two decades it was decided that there was to be only one National Library and that this was the Library of Congress. The situation was obviously fluid in 1846 and for some years later: the outcome might have been the opposite—the Smithsonian Library growing into all the attributes and functions of the national library, and the Library of Congress stagnating or dwindling into a legislative reference collection—or each might have survived, somewhat wastefully, as a national library in its own right. That the outcome was what it was, resulted from the complex nature of the Smithsonian Institution, involving inward tensions and strains, the individuality of its first secretary, Joseph Henry, and the

eventual arrival on the scene of Ainsworth Spofford.

Joseph Henry (1797–1878) was a physicist of first-rate abilities who had made many important discoveries and would have made many more had not the necessity of earning his living as a teacher seriously limited the time he could spend in pure scientific research: America had not yet learned to endow the laboratory worker. For the last fourteen years he had held the professorship of Natural Philosophy at Princeton, carrying on so far as classes permitted his penetrating investigations of the properties of electric currents, and had won general esteem as man, teacher, and scientist. To him the Regents of the Smithsonian turned for their first secretary, and although he was most reluctant to leave Princeton, he accepted the call out of a sense of duty and came to Washington in the last month of 1846. Since James Smithson had himself been a physical scientist, with some achievements to his credit in chemistry and mineralogy, it was an appropriate enough appointment.

Although the Congress may have been in some doubt and some vagueness as to the nature and functions of the Smithsonian Institution, Professor Henry was from the outset very clear on the subject, and gave finished expression to his views in his first annual report to the Regents. The increase of knowledge could obviously only be achieved by scientific research, and the diffusion of knowledge among men could best be accomplished by the publication and distribution of the results. The Smithsonian ought therefore to be primarily and essentially a center of research with a lengthening series of publications, and as for “objects of art and of foreign and curious research” and the rest of it, that was merely a diversion of Smithson’s money from its proper use. The law which imposed them upon the Institution ought

to be changed, the Regents and Congress were regularly admonished; or if Congress insisted on maintaining these expensive sidelines it ought to pay for them out of the Treasury and not out of the bequest.

Meanwhile, the law was the law and Professor Henry loyally carried out its provisions. To look after the library for the growth of which a portion of his income was earmarked, he found not merely a man of sound sense and learning, as Senator Choate had stipulated, but probably the ablest librarian in the country. Charles Coffin Jewett (1816-1868), although still a very young man, was professor of Modern Languages and Literature at Brown University, as well as librarian, and had only recently returned from a prolonged tour of Europe in the course of which he had inspected its libraries and collected books for John Carter Brown. In March of 1848 Professor Henry brought Professor Jewett to Washington to assemble and administer the Smithsonian library. Professor Jewett was as full of energy as one of Professor Henry's own electromagnets; the array of projects which he evolved in the course of the next few years for systematic, comprehensive and cooperative bibliography and librarianship are startling in their modernity, and form a glaring contrast to the ideas and ideals prevailing in the Library of Congress at the same period, under the soporific cum somnolent direction of John Silva Meehan. Characteristic of his enterprise was *A plan for Stereotyping Catalogues by Separate Titles* first printed in 1850 and separately issued in 1851; this was the first assault on the problem for which the printed catalog card is the present-day solution. However, Professor Jewett went beyond his brief and Professor Henry found that he was nursing a viper in his bosom. Professor Jewett was also very clear on the nature and objectives of the Smithsonian Institution: it was going to be primarily

a great reference library which would engross most of the income, and scientific research must remain a sideline. The conflict of purposes was irreconcilable, but was eventually resolved in a very simple manner: on July 10, 1854, Professor Henry fired Professor Jewett. Senator Choate, the eminent sponsor of the Smithsonian library, resigned in protest from the Board of Regents. The greatest gainer was the Boston Public Library, which thereupon engaged Jewett's services, and for the last ten years of his life he was its director, guiding it toward that eminence which it soon attained and has never since lost.

For the next decade the Smithsonian library was developed as a purely scientific collection subsidiary to its research projects, but Professor Henry may be forgiven if he continued to regard it and librarians with suspicion. Then, in January 1865, a serious fire ravaged the upper story of the Smithsonian building, destroying the Stanley Indian Gallery and the surviving papers of James Smithson. The library, in the west wing, was unharmed, but was demonstrated to be housed in no very safe manner. This wing was, furthermore, already "filled to overflowing," in part by those general collections purchased by Professor Jewett, but in much larger degree by the publications of foreign academies and scientific societies whose annual volumes flowed steadily in as exchanges for the Smithsonian Institution's *Annual Reports* (from 1846; with the fifth report, for 1850, the inclusion of scientific papers was begun), *Contributions to Knowledge* (from 1848), and *Miscellaneous Collections* (from 1862), the fruits of Professor Henry's sagacious publishing policy. The Institution would be seriously pressed for working space during the reconstruction of the building, and could put this wing to good use if the books could be otherwise disposed of. Early in



March came his opportunity: the new Librarian of Congress, who wanted a National Library as badly as the secretary of the Smithsonian did not want one, obtained a congressional appropriation for an extensive enlargement of his quarters. Not long after, in Mr. Spofford's narrative of the transaction written thirty years later, Professor Henry,

impressed by the peril which the collection of books had just escaped, sought a conference with the joint committee on the Library of Congress, in conjunction with the librarian. He developed to them a plan for securing the library from any future danger, while it might be brought at the same time to enrich the great library of the government. In the view of Professor Henry, several highly desirable objects would be accomplished by the union of the two libraries at the Capitol. As two spacious and fire-proof wings, constructed of solid iron, had just been added to the Congressional Library, there was then ample room for the orderly arrangement of the Smithsonian collection there, instead of attempting to continue it in the narrow quarters, already overflowed, which it occupied, and which were greatly needed for other purposes during the reconstruction of the Smithsonian building. The removal would also relieve the Smithsonian fund of the expense of a library, including salary of librarians, and the cost of binding books, leaving so much more of the annual income free to be devoted to the promotion and publication of original researches in science. The latter having always been the cardinal object of the Institution, in Professor Henry's view, he had early taken the ground that the collection of a library should be kept somewhat subordinate, and confined mainly to the publications of scientific societies and aids to scientific study.

If this temperate narrative omits anything, we may guess that it is Spofford's delight at the opportunity, and Henry's relief at finding his proposition welcomed. Professor Henry, however, did not undervalue his library; he knew well that it was the best collection of the proceedings of scientific and learned societies in the country, and he made stipulations to preserve its identity and its availability to the Smithsonian. These were accepted by his own Regents, by Mr. Spofford, and by the

Library Committee, and were embodied in the act of April 5, 1866, by which Congress provided for the Smithsonian Deposit in the Library of Congress. The materials received through the Smithsonian "shall not be removed except on reimbursement by the Smithsonian Institution to the Treasury of the United States of expenses incurred in binding and in taking care of the same;" such a contingency was not very likely to occur, but it necessitated a special stamping or other identification of every item coming from this source, and today, as M. C. Leikind says, the Smithsonian Deposit not only comprises the serried ranks of society proceedings, but "also includes many thousands of other books, pamphlets, and manuscripts each marked with an identifying stamp but distributed and shelved throughout the Library according to classification." The second section of the act provided, concerning the Deposit, that "the Smithsonian Institution shall have the use thereof, in like manner as it is now used, and the public shall have access thereto for purposes of consultation." This is apparently the first instance when the interest of the general public in the Library of Congress was expressly recognized in legislation, and therefore is a noteworthy step in the evolution of the National Library. Section three stipulated that "the Smithsonian Institution, through its secretary, shall have the use of the library of Congress, subject to the same regulations as Senators and Representatives"—*i. e.*, the Institution retained, through its secretary, the borrowing privilege. This could perhaps be claimed as the genesis of "Government Loan" as a function of the Library, the previous extensions of the borrowing privilege having been exclusively personal, while the present one was expressly for the benefit of the whole Institution, although funneled through the person of the secretary, as the present government

loans are funneled through the librarians of the several departments and agencies.

The fourth section of the act must have been particularly welcome to Mr. Spofford: it authorized the Librarian of Congress to employ two additional assistants, at \$1,000 and \$800 respectively—this being the staff which had looked after the Smithsonian library in its original home. In fact, "the Smithsonian librarian, Dr. Theodore N. Gill, was transferred with the library to the Capitol, and continued to catalogue and superintend the collection, in the service of Congress until he resigned some years later to devote himself to scientific work." This was the beginning of that slow but steady expansion of the staff of the Library which went on throughout Spofford's administration, until the four assistants of 1864 had risen to 42 in 1896, with a salary budget of \$55,320. Meanwhile Professor Henry had two vacant positions which he could now devote to purposes closer to his heart.

In his first Annual Report, of December 3, 1866, Mr. Spofford was able to report that the library belonging to the Smithsonian Institution "is now in process of removal, to be incorporated with the Library of Congress, as a special deposit," and to comment upon its significance:

This large accession to the treasures of the library is especially valuable in the range of scientific books, comprising by far the largest collection of the journals and transactions of learned societies, foreign and domestic, which exists in America. It is also found to be an important supplement to the present library in the departments of linguistics, bibliography [this had been one of the specialties most emphasized by Jewett], statistics, voyages and travels, and works relating to the fine arts; in each of which departments it embraces works of great cost and value, while its collection of books in all branches of natural history is invaluable. About one-half the collection has already been removed and partially catalogued, while the remainder only awaits the completion of the south wing of the library to be transferred and arranged upon the shelves. It is believed that the greatly enlarged facilities for research

thus supplied to readers prosecuting any branch of inquiry will be appreciated by all who have heretofore resorted to the Smithsonian library, while the annual accessions of valuable books, derived from the systematic exchanges by the Smithsonian Institution of its publications with societies and individuals in all parts of the world, fully compensate Congress for the additional expenses involved in the proper custody of the books belonging to the Smithsonian Institution. The union of the two libraries will prove doubly advantageous to those heretofore resorting to either, and will insure the rapid growth of a great and truly national library, with far greater economy of means than would attend the duplication, so to speak, of two large libraries at the seat of government of the United States.

In the course of the winter of 1866-67, the south wing was completed, and the remainder of the Smithsonian library removed to the Capitol. A precise enumeration of the volumes involved does not appear to have been made; Mr. Spofford estimated them at 40,000 in his first Report and let it remain at that. They "completely filled one entire gallery of the . . . south wing . . . and overflowed into another gallery below." An important byproduct of the transfer was that a "Catalogue of Publications of Societies, and of Other Periodical Works in the Library of the Smithsonian Institution" was completed and published in the Smithsonian *Miscellaneous Collections*.

In one of his subsequent reports Professor Henry looked back upon the transaction with an approving eye, and gave the Library of Congress a patronizing pat on the back:

The union of the library of the Institution with that of Congress still continues to be productive of important results. The Smithsonian fund is relieved by this arrangement from the maintenance of a separate library, while at the same time the Institution has not only the free use of its own books, but also those of the library of Congress. On the other hand, the collection of books owned by Congress would not be worthy of the name of a national library were it not for the Smithsonian deposit. The books which it receives from this source are eminently those which exhibit



the progress of the world in civilization, and are emphatically those essential to the contemporaneous advance of our country in the higher science of the day.

Valuable as was the collection of books thus received, even more valuable and significant was the prospective aspect of the Deposit, upon which Mr. Spofford had put his finger in mentioning "the annual accessions of valuable books derived from the systematic exchanges by the Smithsonian Institution." The Smithsonian Deposit would be a live and growing thing, as it is at this day, and another means of automatic acquisition, over and beyond copyright deposits, had been acquired by the Library of Congress. The Library had hitherto been able to effect an occasional exchange of its duplicates, but had nothing remotely comparable to the influx of learned and scientific publications coming in return for the world-wide dissemination of the Smithsonian series conceived and given practical being by Joseph Henry. This was the opposite side of the Diffusion of Knowledge: in the intellectual balance of trade, exports of knowledge brought back imports of knowledge; none lost, and all gained.

Mr. Spofford was able to report the first fruits of the newly opened up source in his next Annual Report, December 1, 1867; a year's operation had brought in 1,432 volumes, 4,417 pamphlets or parts of volumes, and 187 maps. The figures remained in the neighborhood of 1,500 books and not a great many more than that number of pamphlets until 1877, when the Smithsonian evidently effected a widening of its exchanges, for the books received rose to 2,231 and the pamphlets to 2,184, and stayed on that level for a time. By 1887, however, the saturation of Library space in the Capitol brought about a temporary hitch in the system: since the Library perforce had to reduce its

receipts, the most important serials were retained at the Smithsonian or the National Museum, and some of the back files were withdrawn to keep them company. This was ironed out, however, after the opening of the new Library in 1897, when this accumulation was transferred to the Hill, some of it for the second time. There are today nearly 1,000,000 volumes in the Smithsonian Deposit in the Library of Congress.

As the heir of the Smithsonian's system of exchanges, it was a natural consequence for the Library of Congress to seek to place beside it a complementary system for the exchange of government documents. The Smithsonian library was barely installed in the south wing before the first important step in this direction was taken. A joint resolution approved March 2, 1867 provided

That 50 copies of all documents hereafter printed by order of either House of Congress, and 50 copies additional of all documents printed in excess of the usual number, together with 50 copies of each publication issued by any department or bureau of the government, be placed at the disposal of the joint committee on the Library, who shall exchange the same, through the agency of the Smithsonian Institution, for such works published in foreign countries, and especially by foreign governments, as may be deemed by said committee an equivalent; said works to be deposited in the Library of Congress.

As Mr. Spofford reported at the end of the year, this resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled made no impression on the Congressional Printer, and was therefore of no effect:

The Congressional Printer having taken the ground that this resolution does not direct him to print any additional number of the congressional documents to that authorized by existing laws, and the quota of such documents, actually printed, being all distributed, the undersigned has been unable to secure the required documents with which to commence the system of exchanges proposed. A circular has, however, been transmitted to nearly all foreign govern-

ments by the officers of the Smithsonian Institution, whose fully organized system of exchanges it was proposed to employ in this agency, and a sufficient number of replies have been elicited to show that the proposed exchange meets with great favor, and will be very generally embraced. Among the governments which have responded affirmatively to the circular . . . are those of Great Britain, Russia, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, Switzerland, Chili, and Costa Rica. The deficiencies of the library in works published at the expense of foreign governments are very great; and as these works embody much valuable information, not elsewhere found, respecting the history, legislation, statistics, and condition of the countries they represent, the importance of securing as full a representation of them as possible for future use and reference becomes apparent. A supplementary act, together with an appropriation adequate to carry into effect the purpose of the resolution, is earnestly recommended.

Congress thereupon proceeded to pass, on July 25, 1868, "A Resolution to carry into Effect the Resolution approved March 2, 1867," in such repetitiously emphatic terms as to make the Congressional Printer's duties quite clear to him:

*Resolved . . .*, That the congressional printer, whenever he shall be so directed by the joint Committee on the Library, be, and he hereby is, directed to print 50 copies in addition to the regular number, of all documents hereafter printed by order of either house of Congress, or by order of any department or bureau of the government, and whenever he shall be so directed by the Joint Committee on the Library, 100 copies additional of all documents ordered to be printed, in excess of the usual number; said 50 or 100 copies to be delivered to the librarian of Congress, to be exchanged . . . as provided . . .

*Sec. 2. And be it further resolved*, That 50 copies of each publication printed under direction of any department or bureau of the government, whether at the Congressional Printing Office or elsewhere, shall be placed at the disposal of the joint committee . . .

Nevertheless by the time of his next Annual Report, December 1, 1868, no extra documents had yet been printed, and Mr. Spofford was somewhat embarrassed by the fact that contributions were already coming in from Russia, Sweden, Spain,

Chile, and the free city of Hamburg. Eventually, however, the Printer got into his stride and the balance of document exchange began to swing in the opposite direction. The influx of foreign documents signally failed to become either strong or continuous. The loud lament which Mr. Spofford incorporated in his Annual Report for 1887 sets forth the defects of the system so far as returns to the United States and the Library of Congress were concerned:

. . . It may be said in brief, that 38 foreign governments have for years received all the publications of the United States Government, an extensive and costly series of public documents; that from most of these countries very imperfect and inadequate returns have been received, while from some of them nothing has come in exchange; that repeated and long-continued efforts to secure more adequate reciprocity by correspondence have been productive of very slight results; that only fragmentary and incomplete sets of the publications of foreign governments are to be found in the Library, thus depriving Congress of that full access to information concerning other countries which is so important an adjunct to their labors . . .

One effective step was taken to produce an improvement in this situation during 1884-85. An agent of the Smithsonian Institution was sent abroad, half of his expenses being paid by the Library, and credentials being supplied by the Department of State as well as by the Institution and the Library. In the course of a few months he visited 14 governments, and was remarkably successful in persuading the responsible officials to part with their documents; he was able to dispatch home 44 cases and 160 packages of books, containing about 7,000 volumes. Mr. Spofford was so impressed by the result of this field-work that in his Annual Report for 1885 and in various subsequent reports he urged that the agency be made permanent:

It has long been apparent that no permanent improvement in the very defective operations of



these international exchanges can be expected until some special agency is organized in Europe to give personal attention to the practical business of securing full returns of all Government publications. The distribution of documents is scattered in most Governments among different bureaus, with no common head . . . An agent of the United States either constantly upon the ground, or visiting periodically at regular intervals the bureaus of the Government in the various countries, supplied with full lists both of our wants and of the publications, regular and special, of the Government presses, would furnish a permanent and, it may be added, the only efficient guarantee of realizing from the system of international exchanges what we have a right to expect.

However, the Congress, possibly under the just impression that the Library of Congress could not at that time properly handle the volume of accessions it was receiving already, did not authorize or appropriate for another European agency.

Meanwhile, a model scheme for the perfection of document exchange had been laid down at Brussels, where on March 15, 1886, Lambert Tree, United States Minister to Belgium, entered with the representatives of seven other powers—Belgium, Brazil, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Serbia, and Switzerland—into a "Convention for International Exchange of Documents, Scientific and Literary Publications." It called for the establishment in each of the States participating "a bureau charged with the duty of the exchanges," which bureau should print a yearly list of all available documents, and provided that transmissions should be made directly from bureau to bureau. The United States Senate ratified after two years, and the Convention was proclaimed on January 15, 1889. Unfortunately, however, there was no universal adherence to the example here given, and receipts from governments outside the Convention remained somewhat erratic in Mr. Spofford's day. The Library, however, had not allowed the talent which it

received from the Smithsonian to remain unused, and it had made international document exchange a reality, if not a completely perfected and successful system.

One of the inescapable functions of any institution pretending to the status of a National Library is that of the custody of the records of the Nation's past. The Library of Congress must ever be particularly concerned with the history of the United States and of those colonial enterprises in which its nationhood originated. That its claims in this respect were very feeble indeed at the beginning of Mr. Spofford's administration we have already seen—and this in spite of the emphasis which Thomas Jefferson had put upon such materials. Within a little more than two years a long step had been taken toward eliminating that reproach, and providing a basis for the Library's present-day eminence in the discharge of this responsibility.

At the beginning of 1867 there lived in Washington at the corner of Twelfth and D Streets Northwest, looking out upon Pennsylvania Avenue, a simple-mannered, courteous, quiet, and scholarly old gentleman who there maintained two houses, a large garden, an indeterminate number of cats, and, in the house farther from the corner, the largest private collection of books and other materials relating to America yet brought together. This was Peter Force, now in his seventy-seventh year, who had graduated from printing, journalism, and politics to become a zealous and single-minded collector and publisher of the primary materials of American history. His monumentally conceived scheme for their publication, the *American Archives*, had been taken up by the United States Government, and had progressed through nine massive volumes covering three crucial years of our history—1774–1776—when it had been high-handedly and illegally dropped by the

spoilsman Marcy on his taking over the Department of State in 1853. Force was left in a financial predicament, for which he refused to obtain a legal remedy, and was obliged to mortgage his property in order to maintain himself in a simple and impecunious manner during his old age. But he had one great asset remaining: the noble library, comprising not only 22,529 books, but also nearly a thousand volumes of bound newspapers, about a quarter of them dating from the eighteenth century; an unrivalled collection of nearly 40,000 pamphlets; a collection of atlases and over a thousand separate maps, about a third of them in manuscript; 429 volumes of manuscripts, all possessing historical significance, and many of them from the period of the Revolution; and a great mass of transcripts assembled for inclusion in the *Archives*. A sideline into which Force's collecting propensity had led him was that of early printed books, in which field he had assembled 161 volumes of incunabula, and 250 more printed in the sixteenth century. Peter Force had been early in the field, well ahead of the plutocrats, and the pickings had indeed been rich.

Eventually it became high time for Mr. Force to take steps for the rehabilitation of his estate and the preservation intact of his collection. He had lived in New York City as a boy and learned the printer's craft there, and his first negotiations were with the New York Historical Society. A price of \$100,000 was declared to be fair by George Bancroft and Henry C. Murphy, and was agreed upon; but it remained to be seen whether the Society could raise such a sum. The librarian of the Society, George H. Moore, went on trying for six months, but eventually had to report to Force, in a letter of December 11, 1865, that it could not be done.

Ainsworth Spofford and Peter Force were manifestly kindred spirits, and had become good friends during the former's

six-year residence in Washington. With the collapse of the New York negotiation it became possible for Spofford to labor for what would be a service both to his venerable friend and to himself and his Library. By the close of the first session of the Thirty-ninth Congress—July 28, 1866—he had obtained the ear of the Joint Committee on the Library and evoked the “unanimously expressed desire” of its Members that he should make a thorough examination of the Force library and report upon its contents, desirability, and value. This he did in a *Special Report of the Librarian of Congress to the Joint Committee on the Library concerning the Historical Library of Peter Force, Esq.*, dated January 25, 1867, which was printed but not as a congressional document. In it he expounded with some eloquence one of the logical consequences of the National Library idea:

When it is remembered that the Congressional Library is for the use of our national legislature, and represents the nationality of the American people, it is plainly of the utmost consequence to render it complete in all that can illustrate our history and progress as a nation. Two predominant ideas should be kept steadily in view: first, as the library of a legislative body, it should be made absolutely complete in all that relates to the departments of law, government and politics; secondly, as the great national library of the United States, it should contain all publications relating to our own country . . . In each of these two departments it should be the aim of such a Library to possess every book which has been issued, since the American publicist and historian can make no exhaustive research without having access to all the materials which former writers have accumulated . . .

To secure the possession of the invaluable manuscript materials of the American Archives alone, Congress would be justified in appropriating a very liberal sum. That these sources of so much hitherto unpublished history should go into private hands to be scattered, or consumed by fire, could not but be regarded by every intelligent American as a national misfortune. Viewed merely as a commercial transaction, the purchase of this Library at \$100,000 is considerably cheaper



than the average cost of the present Library of Congress, which was mainly purchased before the present expansion of values. But viewed in the more accurate light of an unique and elsewhere unattainable addition to our stores of knowledge respecting the origin of our American civilization and government, the importance of the question far transcends any statement that can be made in dollars and cents . . . Congress represents the richest and most liberal people in the world, and may safely be asked to do once in a century what the British Government does every year of its existence, namely, to devote \$100,000 to increase its national repository of knowledge. It is not creditable to our national spirit to have to admit the fact—which nevertheless is true—that the largest and most complete collection of books relating to America in the world is that now gathered on the shelves of the British Museum. To repair this deficiency, while the opportunity exists, and to secure the chance of adding to this National Library the largest and best collection of the sources of American history yet brought together in this country, the undersigned confidently appeals to the judgment and liberality of this committee and of Congress.

A. R. SPOFFORD

It is to the eternal credit of the Thirty-ninth Congress that the justice of this argument was recognized, and a paragraph inserted in the miscellaneous appropriation act of March 2, 1867:

To enable the joint committee on the library of Congress to purchase the historical library of Peter Force for the library, one hundred thousand dollars.

As a result, before the month was out, Mr. Spofford had the whole collection inside the Capitol, and the business of cataloging under way. One sequel was a little saddening: Peter Force, however solvent, could not endure the company of his vacant shelves, and every day trudged the twelve blocks to the Capitol to rejoin the books with which he had lived so long. But it was hard going for an old man to climb a hill in the mud of a Washington winter; one day he did not appear, and on January 23, 1868 he was dead.

The Smithsonian scientific library, the Force historical library, the Patent Office

copyright collection: each came in its turn to swell the Library in the Capitol, which was also receiving a steady and growing annual accretion from copyright deposits and Smithsonian and document exchanges: the National Library was indeed looking up. Mr. Spofford, in his Annual Report for 1869, went so far as to call for a consolidation of all the Government libraries in Washington with the Library of Congress—a call which remained unanswered, save for the special case of the Patent Office collection—and in the same year addressed the American Social Science Association on "The Public Libraries of the United States," which paper was published in their *Journal of Social Science* for 1870. His library was now in very different case from 1864, when *Harper's Monthly* had ignored its existence, and he pointed with pride to its renovated and strengthened status as the National Library:

. . . No department of literature or science has been left unrepresented in its formation, and the fact has been kept steadily in view that the Library of the Government must become, sooner or later, a universal one. As the only Library which is entitled to the benefit of the Copyright law . . . , this collection must become annually more important as an exponent of the growth of American literature. This wise provision of law prevents the dispersion or destruction of books that tend continually to disappear; a benefit to the cause of letters, the full value of which it requires some reflection to estimate.

This National Library now embraces 183,000 volumes, besides about 50,000 pamphlets. It is freely open, as a library of reference and reading, to the whole people; but the books are not permitted to be drawn out, except by Senators and Representatives for use at the seat of government. Two things it yet needs to complete its usefulness, both to our national legislature and to the people by whose means it has been built up and sustained. First, the completion (now nearly accomplished) of its printed catalogue of subjects, which will furnish a complete key to unlock its treasures; and secondly, to be thrown open to readers during the evening as well as during the hours of business. Its value to the

numerous class employed in the public service would thereby be incalculably increased; and, if Washington is ever to become anything more than an insignificant city, it should present every reasonable privilege and attraction, both to residents and sojourners, which it is in the power of the Government to supply.

The importance of the American history function having been established by the Force purchase, it was in order for a number of other projects for acquisitions, indexes, or publications of various sorts to be put on foot in the years following. For most of these the physical and staff basis of the Library in the Capitol was quite inadequate, and the results were usually disappointing, so that the Library of Congress remained a very secondary factor in the development of American historiography until after the completion of the new building in 1897.

The general appropriation bill of March 3, 1873 contained a provision allotting ten thousand dollars, or so much thereof as might be necessary, "to enable the joint committee on the library to purchase and print a series of unpublished historical documents relating to the early French discoveries in the Northwest and on the Mississippi . . . , the printing of the same to be under the direction of the said committee." Thereby the United States Government became the sponsor, after three years of urging, of Pierre Margry's *Memoires et documents pour servir à l'histoire des origines françaises des pays d'outre-mer. Découvertes et établissements des Français dans l'ouest et dans le sud d'Amérique Septentrionale*. The urging came as much from American historians as from Margry, who in the strength of his official position as assistant custodian of the Archives of the Marine and Colonies at Paris, had succeeded in building himself up a private monopoly in official manuscript documents relating to La Salle, and in keeping such American investigators as Sparks and Parkman from so much as a sight of sources essential to

their research. When, as a result of the American subsidy, the three volumes relating to La Salle's discoveries appeared from 1876 to 1878, that stout Irish-American historian, John Gilmary Shea, put out a pamphlet entitled *The Bursting of Pierre Margry's La Salle Bubble* (New York, 1879)—maintaining that the documents failed to substantiate Margry's previously published claims on behalf of La Salle's priority in a number of respects. The connection of the Library of Congress with this enterprise may appear rather tenuous, but Spofford had to report to the Library Committee on the progress of the work through its sixth volume, pay off the crotchety Margry, and receive the sets which became government property—not a few of which are still on hand, in the custody of the Library's Publications Office. It is, however, of interest as the only purely historical publication sponsored by the Government of the United States during the Gilded Age.

In 1875 Mr. Spofford's Annual Report appealed to the Congress for an expert to take charge of the Library's accumulation of historical manuscripts and increase their serviceability:

It is very important that every manuscript or written paper in the Library, which can throw any light on any portion of American history, should be systematically arranged and indexed. The increasing attention that is paid to these memorials of the past, and the new uses that are found for old documents, with the growth of the historical spirit in this country, give force to the suggestion now made to the committee, that a competent historical scholar should be employed to put all these loose materials for history in order, and to prepare a thorough index to their contents, under the direction of the Librarian. The present Library force . . . is too fully absorbed in needful clerical and catalogue labors to render it possible to treat this mass of fugitive manuscripts with the requisite time and care.

Congress responded by a provision in the appropriation bill of 1876 allotting \$3,400 for additional clerical help, both for this



purpose and for the large-scale document index project which Mr. Spofford then had on hand. This help appears to have been used chiefly on the document index, and then to have been absorbed in the general manpower deficiency of the Library. At any rate, no "competent historical scholar" beyond Mr. Spofford himself is known to have joined the staff of the Library until the next era, nor was any substantial work completed in indexing the Library's manuscripts.

In fact, the status of the Library of Congress as a repository of manuscripts was a matter of considerable doubt at this period. The important collections of manuscripts acquired by the Government before the Civil War were kept at the Bureau of Rolls and Library in the Department of State, and when, by act of August 2, 1882, Congress purchased the Benjamin Franklin collection belonging to Henry Stevens, the manuscripts were still allotted to the Department of State, while the books, pamphlets, and newspapers came to the Library of Congress. But in this very year, 1882, Congress began to reverse itself on this issue. The Marquis de Rochambeau, descendant of Washington's colleague, first offered his ancestor's papers to the United States through its legation at Paris in 1877, but eventually brought them across the Atlantic for the inspection of the Joint Committee on the Library. Senator Hoar reported, on February 20, 1882, the united judgment of the Committee that "they should be acquired by our government to form a permanent portion of our historical archives," and recommended the appropriation of \$20,000 for their purchase, the collection *to be preserved in the Library of Congress*. This was accomplished by an act of March 3, 1883, and a further declaration of policy was made in a report of 1888, made by Senator Evarts from the Library Committee, on the desirability of a department of

manuscripts in the new building, the construction of which was at long last on its way:

The collection and preservation of historical records should be an object of national concern. In every country there are many scattered collections of manuscript valuable to historical inquirers, but comparatively inaccessible because they are either in private hands, or in the archives of societies local in character, and not widely known.

In some European nations, public attention has long since been drawn to the importance of enlarging the national collections of state papers and government archives by the addition of manuscripts in private hands . . .

In the United States, while much zeal and energy have long been manifested by private individuals and historical societies in the collection of manuscripts and autographs, little has yet been done by the General Government in this direction.

The purchase by Congress, through successive appropriations, of the papers of Washington, Madison, Jefferson, Monroe, Franklin, and Rochambeau, represents all the notable acquisitions of manuscripts by our Government, although these are of inestimable value. The historical library of Peter Force, of Washington, however, purchased by Congress in 1867, brought with it a large assemblage of historical and military papers . . . which . . . present much material of great interest to historical inquirers. That this extensive collection of books, manuscripts, maps, and newspapers was saved through a wise and timely purchase by the Government from being dispersed in the possession of numerous scattered collectors is matter of congratulation with all who appreciate the importance of enriching our national stores of material for historical research.

It becomes constantly more apparent that a wise and careful expenditure in the same direction is an aim worthy of the National Government . . . Where are the papers, public and private, left by the Presidents of the United States since the time of Monroe? . . . When once scattered these manuscript records of the past are rarely or never re-united.

In view of the erection now in progress of a commodious and fire-proof National Library building, the Joint Committee on the Library deem it a proper time to recommend that a systematic effort should be made to collect and to preserve all manuscript papers which may be

offered to the Government, and to make provision for the purchase of manuscripts deemed of special value. Upon the opening of the new library a special curator or custodian, of the requisite qualifications, should be selected to have charge of the department of manuscripts, and they should be made available to public use, under suitable regulations for their protection.

Mr. Spofford had not, apparently, contemplated a separate department of manuscripts in his original plan for a new building in 1872, but with this encouragement, he included one among the nine divisions recommended in his special report on the complete reorganization of the Library, December 2, 1895, and repeated this in his statement on the use of the Library, January 18, 1897. Such a division was created in the new building, and its rise to preeminence began with the transfer of the Department of State collections early in the next century.

In preparation for the centennial celebrations of 1876, Representative Hardenbergh brought in a resolution in January of the great year which recommended itself to the Congress and eventuated in a proclamation given under the hand of President Grant on May 25. Resolution and proclamation called upon the people of the several States to assemble in their several counties or towns on the approaching exceptionally Glorious Fourth, and listen to a historical sketch of the county or town from its foundation. One copy of the sketch-oration was to be filed in the county clerk's office, "and an additional copy, in print or manuscript, to be filed in the office of the Librarian of Congress, to the intent that a complete record may thus be obtained of the progress of our institutions during the first Centennial of their existence." Many of them did assemble as exhorted, and in his Annual Report for 1877 Mr. Spofford recorded that—

there have been received up to date 225 historical memorials, which are carefully laid aside and

catalogued for binding and preservation. While it may be regretted that the suggestion of Congress has not been to a larger extent complied with, no such contribution to our historical literature can be wholly without benefit.

It would be interesting to see how many of the 225 products of this unique mass-history project could be located in the collections today.

In the same year, 1876, the Librarian was associated with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of the Smithsonian in a commission to "have resort to such means as will most effectually restore the writing of the original manuscript of the Declaration of Independence, with the signatures appended thereto, now in the United States Patent Office." Unfortunately the results of carelessness and neglect could not be reversed, even by the conference of such dignitaries, and our most basic charter remains a dim and cloudy manuscript; but it is interesting to see Mr. Spofford associated with a document of which his successors would one day become the legal guardians.

On March 3, 1877 Congress passed an act calling for an edition, under the supervision of the Librarian of Congress, of "the resolves, ordinances, and acts of the Continental Congress and the Congress of the Confederation." This piece of legislation was simply nullified by Mr. Spofford. In his Annual Report of January 2, 1878, he informed the Congress that this project of theirs was not what was needed: after looking at the manuscript journals, he "found that such large and important omissions had been made in printing these inestimable records of our early political history as to justify him in suspending any attempt at a selection or a fragmentary publication from the journals until Congress should be consulted as to the expediency of printing the originals in full." He promised a special report, which, if made, was not printed



and received no other encouragement. If Congress ignored the large project, no more was heard of the smaller one, and a full edition of the Journals of the Continental Congress had to wait until the next century.

In 1879 another project was introduced into the Senate by Daniel W. Voorhees, the new chairman of the Joint Committee. Mr. Voorhees, the "Tall Sycamore of the Wabash," was a bulwark of the Democratic cause during his twenty years in the Senate, and celebrated for his wide acquaintance with literature as well as for his eloquent oratory. This called for a continuation of the *American Archives* from the papers acquired with the Force library so as to cover the remaining years of the Revolution, 1776-1783. Mr. Spofford drew up a report, which this time was published as a Senate document, estimating that there was enough material on hand to make thirty 800-page folio volumes, which the Government Printing Office would be able to produce and sell at the old price of \$4.00 a volume. No action was taken, and indeed it was obvious by this time that the Library had reached a state of congestion and confusion, and the Librarian one of preoccupation, where constructive projects of such a nature were out of the question. At any rate, nothing further of the sort was broached by the Librarian or the Joint Committee, or imposed upon them by the Congress, during the remaining eighteen years of the Library's sojourn in the Capitol.

In 1882, however, came another acquisition, primarily of an historical character, which the Library was in no condition to receive, but which it nevertheless readily grasped. Joseph Meredith Toner (1825-1896) was another Washington resident of great worship, who had early been so successful as a practicing physician as to be able to devote his closing years to scientific and historical collections and

studies. His special realms, in which he not only made a number of publications but compiled large quantities of transcribed source material and indexes to serials, were American medical biography and the life and writings of George Washington. On March 19, 1882, occurred a phenomenon quite novel and unheard of: Dr. Toner, a private citizen, wrote a letter to the Librarian of Congress offering to the Library and to the Government, on certain conditions but as a gift, the whole of his library and his research collections. Mr. Spofford, after a brief pause to catch his breath, wrote in reply on March 25:

I have had the pleasure to receive your communication of March 19th regarding the future disposition to be made of your valuable Library. Cherishing a very strong desire that this unique collection of books and pamphlets, representing so many years of assiduous, intelligent, and zealous devotion to science on the part of the owner, should not leave the seat of government, I reply with great pleasure to the inquiries made. Having consulted freely with the Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library, Hon. John Sherman, I am enabled now to assure you of his deep interest (as well as my own) in the proposed offer of your Library to the Government of the United States, as a permanent deposit in the Library of Congress, to be kept together as *The Toner Collection*.

While the Chairman of the Library Committee conceives that there is full power vested in the Committee under existing laws, to receive and provide for the separate custody of any donations of books, acting as the official organ of Congress, he suggests that it would be eminently proper that a special act should be passed, recognizing and accepting the gift in behalf of the Government, and making such provisions for its care, preservation and enlargement as may be deemed expedient. There is no difficulty, he thinks, in the way of your putting in the hands of Trustees, selected by you, such funds for the increase of the collection, in any department, as you might deem proper; such increase to be recognized and provided for in the act.

I suggest that the further steps requisite in the premises, whenever your own determination is reached, can be effected by a communication with the Joint Committee on the Library, as the

organ of Congress, either by oral audience or in writing, as you may prefer.

With the expression of my earnest hope that your life-long labors in the cause of letters and science will be fitly crowned with this great public service to the great American people, and that this first example of the gift of a library to the nation will be the precursor of many in the future, I remain, with the highest regard . . .

Dr. Toner thereupon addressed a memorial to the Joint Committee, offering his library, in express terms, "to the United States of America, to be placed in the National Library of the United States at the city of Washington, under the management and control of the Librarian of Congress." The Joint Committee then made a report recommending acceptance of the offer, in which they emphasized its significance: "As the first instance in the history of this Government of the free gift of a large and valuable library to the Nation, it deserves commendation, and the suggestion is not without force that an example so laudable may be productive of many similar literary and scientific benefactions in the future." The joint resolution approved May 19, 1882, accepted the gift in the terms of the offer, and directed the Librarian of Congress to receive it. As a testimony of its gratitude the Library Committee commissioned a bust of Dr. Toner from the sculptor J. Q. A. Ward, and about the time of the passage of the resolution Mr. Spofford penned a letter of instructions to the latter:

As the sittings are about to begin for the Bust of Dr. J. M. Toner, to be undertaken by you, I would ask you, in behalf of the Joint Committee on the Library, who authorized the work—

1. To select a choice block of marble, first class for the purpose in view.
2. To model the Bust either life-size, or a little above, as in your judgment is best suited to the subject, and to the locality where it is to go. This will be (probably) in a hall or corridor very near the entrance room of a door devoted to the Toner Collection, in the Government Library; the Bust to be placed (hereafter) upon a pedestal so that

the features will be nearly on a level with the angle of vision.

In the new building the bust would remain for years in a niche over a door in the office of the Superintendent of the Reading Room, now the office of the Stack and Reader Division—and so not at all on a level with the angle of vision as Mr. Spofford had anticipated. Mr. Spofford and the Library Committee were perfectly right in supposing that Dr. Toner's bequest would ultimately be followed by a host of others, but not until the National Library had been given an adequate physical basis by the provision of a building of its own. The next important presentation, the Gardiner Greene Hubbard Collection of Engravings, was accepted well after the transfer to the new building, on July 7, 1898.

Indeed, the immediate fate of the Toner Collection was such as to discourage any but the most insensitive of donors. "Shortly after the adjournment of Congress, this collection was removed to the Capitol, temporary quarters having been provided for it by partitioning off a portion of the crypt under the rotunda." The precise advantage of removing a fine library from a pleasant house on Louisiana Avenue in order to enter it in a crypt under the Capitol dome would scarcely be perceptible to the ordinary collector exulting in his treasures. In fact the action of Mr. Spofford and the Library Committee in 1882, in accepting the Toner Collection in the then state of the Capitol Library, and with the new building still unappropriated for, can best and most charitably be regarded as an act of faith and a deliberate attempt to lay foundations for a distant future. The Collection ultimately emerged to the light of day, but in one respect the harm done was irreversible. The research collections of Dr. Toner, which might have been of considerable utility had they become generally known



and accessible at the time of their deposit, were eventually by-passed by the general progress of bibliography and historical works of reference and could only be of limited service when they obtained proper space at the turn of the century.

Mr. Spofford reported, at the close of 1882,

The Toner Collection is found to be, in many directions, a valuable supplement to the Library of Congress. In the local history of States, counties and towns, in biography, in medical science, in early imprints, and in several classes of miscellaneous literature the collection embraces much valuable material, which is added to from time to time by the donor.

It was true; even the crypt could not discourage Dr. Toner, who in the next year turned over "an extensive collection of authentic portraits of American physicians and surgeons, including many of early date, which have been fully indexed for ready reference;" kept up his donations with perfect regularity and in the last year of his life (Mr. Spofford's Report of May 28, 1896) presented "328 books and pamphlets . . . besides many letters added to the large and valuable manuscript collection of Washingtoniana."

In fact, the condition of the National Library had now become a national scandal. The horrors of the old Capitol Library, after it had been placed on a national basis and made the recipient of an influx of material far exceeding anything necessary to minister to the needs of Congress or capable of being housed in a suite of rooms in the Capitol, naturally received their classical description from the able pen of Mr. Spofford himself, in his Annual Report of 1872:

From the nature of the case, the evil and inconvenience now experienced of contracting a great library into a space too crowded for proper arrangement is constantly growing. The wooden cases, one hundred in number, reluctantly introduced a year ago to accommodate the overflow of the alcoves, are approximately filled. There is no

possible place for the arrangement or filing of the current periodicals, many of which, therefore, remain comparatively useless for reference until bound. The Library has no packing-room, and the heavy receipts of books from all quarters, by daily mails and otherwise, the bindery business, the cataloguing of the books, the correspondence of the Library, the direction of assistants, and the extensive daily labors of the copyright department, are all constantly going on in those public parts of the Library which should be kept free for readers. Masses of books, pamphlets, newspapers, engravings, &c., in the course of collation, cataloguing, labeling, and stamping, in preparation for their proper location in the Library, are necessarily always under the eye and almost under the feet of members of Congress and other visitors. No remark is more common than the expression of surprise at the disarrangement always visible in those portions of the Library where these processes are continually going on . . . Until Congress shall provide adequate space for performing these varied labors, they must of necessity go on directly under the public eye; and if the marble floors are littered with books in various stages of preparation for use, it is because that body has not yet provided quarters where processes can be separated from results, but has left the Librarian no chance to exhibit his results without at the same time exhibiting all the processes by which those results are attained.

The horrors were auditory as well as visual:

Under these adverse circumstances, it must not be wondered at that the Library of Congress, with all its apparent advantages as the largest and one of the most progressive of American Libraries, is comparatively an unfit place for students. The exigencies of its current business involve an amount of verbal direction and consequent interruption to the studies of readers, which are incompatible with that rule of silence which should be the law of all great libraries of reference. It is with great regret that I am compelled to record the admission that, with the exception of one narrow reading-room in the north wing, capable of seating only twenty readers, the entire Library of Congress affords no place for the quiet pursuit of study, but is subject to the constant annoyance of compulsory violations of its rule of silence by its own officers, and by the invasion of frequent processions of talking visitors.

This state of things, with Mr. Spofford in the midst of it, occasioned various com-

ment. We have his daughter's word for it that some people affected to regard it as a conspiracy:

He was even accused of deliberately piling up the masses of material that congested the old library in the Capitol, for the sake of the effect upon congressmen. Any one who knew his character would deny this, for two reasons:—he would never have taken thought or time to set a dramatic scene, and he really preferred the tools of his trade in heaps about him. To him it was orderly enough. He had that highly developed sense of location which is as keen as a retriever's scent.

Herbert Putnam also came to believe that a state of untidiness was native and natural to Ainsworth Spofford:

Why *system*, when the motive was pure? Hence his complacency—quite incorrigible—in disorder about him; a complacency as delightful to me personally as it was, at times, perplexing officially. He had, in fact, *an* order always in view; but it was an ultimate and ideal order, not a present and adjacent one.

It is hazardous to disagree concerning a man with his daughter and his successor, but neither could have known Mr. Spofford as a young man. If the Acquisitions and Processing Departments of the Library of Congress had today to perform their operations in its reading rooms, and then store most of their results in the same place, it is difficult to see how, with the greatest *Drang nach ordnung*, anything but a complete mess could result. Mr. Spofford was compelled to live with such a mess—growing steadily worse instead of better—for almost thirty years. Thirty years will inure a man to practically anything, and render him quite unable to perceive, let alone become disturbed over, the chaos about him. It is easier to believe that, if in his old age Mr. Spofford did not measure up to Mr. Putnam's standard of tidiness, it was because in the course of his stewardship he had had to put up with a great deal—more, in fact, than any Librarian we can think of.

One of the worst aspects of the situation, strangely enough, received no mention in Mr. Spofford's published reports. He did, however, bring it to the notice of the Library Committee, and Senator Voorhees—a most zealous friend of the Library during his all-too-brief term as chairman—gave it emphatic public exposition in his speech of May 5, 1880. Not only had inflammable materials been introduced into the Library rooms proper, but the collections, in finding storage in nooks and corners of the Capitol, had passed beyond the protection of the fire-proof iron constructions of 1852 and 1866:

But there is still another and a more pressing cause for immediate action on our part than any I have yet named. There is danger every hour of a destructive fire in the Library. . . . In order to accommodate, to some extent at least, this increasing flow of books, and to keep them from absolutely blocking up the passage ways of the Library-rooms, the Librarian has been compelled to introduce over two hundred wooden cases of shelves into the iron alcoves. The language of the Librarian himself on this point is as follows:

These cases of pine wood may not be immediately dangerous since the heat that warms the Library is brought in steam-pipes for 200 feet underground from the heating apparatus of the Senate and House of Representatives. But there is serious risk of fire in the upper loft of the Library, which contains most of the newspapers and documents, and where the great collection of maps are from necessity piled in heaps. This room is full of combustibles, and is detached from the fire-proof or iron-cased apartments of the Library, so that a fire once communicated would sweep shelving, periodicals, maps, and all before it. With incessant watchfulness such a calamity may be averted, but Congress should not suffer such a risk to be run for a day by failing longer to provide adequate and fire-proof accommodations for the great and precious collections of which it is the responsible custodian.

Sir, a fire may break out at any moment in that dark upper loft, where gas has to be lit by the



Librarian and his assistants whenever their duties call them there. The very dust of decomposing paper, and of the friction induced by constant handling may become inflammable. In fact, with all the incessant watchfulness of the officers of the Library there is no safety there at all for the public property under our care. I hope a conflagration here in the Capitol may not be necessary to unite our minds in the discharge of a plain public duty.

The possible worst did not happen; the Library of Congress was not destined to be wholly or partly consumed a third time. But there is some reason to think that its collections escaped across First Street just in time. On November 6, 1898, an explosion occurred in the cellar of the Capitol, and was followed by a fire which severely damaged the portion of the building occupied by the Supreme Court (the old Senate wing). Many papers in the cellar were destroyed, and the fire passed up through the roof in the stairway hall, reaching even to the wooden skylights and the woodwork at the base of the dome. Had the Library collections still been scattered from the cellar to the regions under the dome, it is hard to believe that all could have escaped greater or less damage.

We cannot leave our description of the latter-day chaos in the old Capitol Library without quoting at some length Mr. Putnam's classical picture of the Librarian himself at home in the midst of it, a tireless factotum:

To those who visited the old Library of Congress at the Capitol (and during the latter half of the 19th century they numbered thousands) he will always be associated with it—a long, lean figure, in scrupulous frock, erect at a standing desk, and intent upon its littered burden, while the masses of material surged incoherently about him. From time to time—an inquiry interrupting—a swift, decisive turn, an agile stride, a nervous burrow in some apparently futile heap, and a return triumphant, yet staidly triumphant, with the required volume. Then again absorption: in other volumes already subjugated, in auction catalogs, in copyright certificates, in correspondence (invariably autograph), in notes for editorial

use, in the countless minutiae of insistent, direct, undelegated labor. A figure of absorption and of labor, consonant with the collections as they then existed; quaint indeed in mode and expression, yet efficient; immersed in the trivial, yet himself by no means trivial, imparting to it the dignity that comes of intense seriousness and complete sincerity. Grave in the task of infinite detail upon a mass of infinite dimension: grave, but never dour. Cheerful rather, even buoyant. Disdaining the frivolous as a waste of time; yet appreciating humor, and even responsive to accredited jest . . . Granting himself . . . few vacations, and generally ignoring even the "annual leave" so scrupulously observed by most Government employees. Glorifying, rather, in the assiduity which his hardy, if attenuated, frame permitted.

We have seen what little progress could be made by sundry historical projects in the setting of these conditions. Other functions of a national library, or of any library, flourished little better. The printed catalogs of the Library of Congress had issued in a remarkably steady series since the 10-page pamphlet came from the press of William Duane in 1802, and this in spite of wars, fires, and political revolutions. But they were not to survive long after the Library had taken on the burden of copyright registration. The catalogs of annual accessions appeared with great regularity until 1872, when a 597-page *Catalogue of books added to the Library of Congress during the year 1871* came from the Government Printing Office. There followed a four-year silence, and then a final splutter. In the centennial year, Mr. Spofford managed to bring out a *Catalogue of recently added books, Library of Congress, 1873-75*; but this, in spite of an index to subjects and titles, went only to 383 pages, and was confined to principal accessions. It was the last of its race, which had begun with the *Supplement* of 1820.

In 1869 Mr. Spofford brought to completion what, if we ignore the personal associations of the 1815 volume, is certainly





SCENE IN THE OLD CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY, WASHINGTON, D.C., SHOWING PRESENT CONGESTED CONDITION.—DRAWN BY W. BENGOUGH.

*"Scene in the old Congressional Library . . ." as depicted by W. Bengough in Harper's Weekly of February 27, 1897. Ainsworth Rand Spofford, Librarian of Congress from 1865 to 1897, is at the right, and David Hutcheson, who later became the first Superintendent of the Reading Room, renders service at the left.*





the most perfect, complete, and important printed general catalog of books ever to be issued by the Library of Congress. This was the *Catalogue of the Library of Congress: Index of Subjects*, in two volumes of 1744 continuously numbered pages, to which he had looked forward as a necessary complement to the author index volume of 1864, and which he had described to the American Social Science Association as an indispensable adjunct of the National Library. In the preface he adhered to his ideas of the alphabet as the most perfect of all finding instruments, and ease of finding as the most useful quality of a catalog:

The purpose of this catalogue is to afford the readiest available key to the books upon every subject which the Library of Congress embraces. It is not its purpose to furnish a bibliographical system, nor to add another to the numerous existing attempts toward the classification of human knowledge. In any such classification, any arrangement except the alphabetical one must, from the nature of the case, be purely arbitrary. While every man can construct a system which sufficiently suits himself, it is commonly found that it is clear to very few others. The one thing needful in a catalogue of subjects is instant facility of reference; and if a scientific arrangement of topics is sometimes sacrificed to this end, the student whose time is saved will be little disposed to quarrel with the bridge that carries him safely over.

The alphabetical arrangement of topics has been adopted and adhered to, both in the general alphabet and under each subordinate head, with occasional modifications where there seemed to be an overruling reason for it. This method has one undeniable advantage over all others—it is its own interpreter. The alphabetical arrangement of topics, with a sufficiently copious system of cross-references, solves every difficulty as soon as it arises, instead of keeping the reader on a baffled search for knowledge. It thus fulfills the end of the highest utility.

However, in spite of these bold words the Librarian-Cataloguer-Classifer made one significant departure from a purely alphabetical scheme to a logical method of arrangement:

The only important deviation from this rule consists in the grouping of subordinate topics under the general class to which they belong. Thus, the various divisions in theology, law, and medicine, will be found arranged in subordinate alphabets under those general heads, instead of being scattered throughout the catalogue. While much may be said in favor of the latter arrangement, it is believed that the assemblage of all the titles belonging to a given subject, along with their related topics, is more in consonance with the convenience of readers, as well as far more suggestive in point of the information conveyed by the catalogue.

And so, in setting out in our way through the 1869 subject catalog, from *Aargau* to *Zwingli*, we pass only by undivided subjects until we come to *Africa*, and this we find broken down in to (1) *As a whole*; (2) *Central and North Eastern*; (3) *Eastern*; (4) *Southern*; (5) *Northern*; and (6) *Western*; and lastly, an *Appendix*.—*Colonization of the western coast, including Liberia*. How Mr. Spofford's alphabet-minded student in a hurry was to anticipate the last-mentioned subclass we cannot guess. It cannot be denied that Mr. Spofford's Achilles' heel, and the most serious and least pardonable fault in his administration of the Library, was his closed mind on the subject of classification schemes, especially expansible ones, and book numbers. It was here that the Library fell furthest behind other great American libraries during his regime, and here that the greatest task of reconstruction was turned over to his successors. As for his consideration and rejection of printed catalog cards, usable by other libraries, which Dawson Johnston tells us took place in 1876, his reason was the simple one that he had too little help and too little room for so considerable a project. It would be difficult to pronounce him wrong.

The first chief of a separate Catalogue Division in the Library of Congress, J. C. M. Hanson, has termed the 1869 catalog "one of the best illustrations of the alphabetico-classed catalogue now before us."



Mr. Spofford intended to bring it out in subsequent editions, with a more "thoroughly digested index of subjects," but a project claiming priority was to bring up-to-date the 1864 author catalog, now hopelessly unrepresentative of the full extent of the collections. In their expanded state, a new author catalog was a tremendous job both of preparation and of printing. Spofford got a first volume from the Government Printing Office in 1878, and a second one two years later. The alphabet reached *Cragin*. There may be seen upon the shelves of the Z classification a printed volume, without title-page or other prefatory matter, which carries on from *Cragin* well into the letter *D*: the sheets were actually printed, and a set or two eventually bound up for Library use, but they were never published. Thus ended the general printed catalogs of the Library of Congress. From that time until the next era the Library was dependent upon "an author catalogue on cards, 17 $\frac{1}{10}$  by 11 $\frac{3}{4}$  cm., entries in part clipped from the printed catalogues." Mr. Hanson, whose task was to supersede it, later reported that while it included some excellent bibliographical work, it was vitiated by radical variations from the catalogs of other American libraries, the absence of definite rules, and, for the later years, lack of adequate supervision.

We must here give brief mention to a somewhat grandiose scheme for a comprehensive "topical index" to documents which Spofford put forward in 1874, and which was printed in a Senate document of June 12, as "Memorandum concerning a complete index to the documents and debates of Congress." The Librarian asked for assistants to index, in a single alphabet, over 1600 volumes: Force's *American Archives*, the *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Sparks' *Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution*, Madison's *Debates in the Federal Convention*,

Elliot's *Debates in the Several State Conventions*, the *Statutes at Large*, *American State Papers*, Wait's *State Papers*, the *Annals of Congress*, the *Register of Debates in Congress*, the *Congressional Globe*, and the congressional documents from 1789 to 1873! Congress appropriated funds for the employment of two additional assistants, and Spofford continued to report progress as late as January 2, 1878, by which time several complete sets totaling about 225 volumes had been gone through. But he still insisted that "no fragmentary work be attempted, and that no part of this index be published until the whole of this vast material shall have been properly prepared, revised, and co-ordinated into a single alphabet." From this time we hear no more of it. Whether, and how far, the index materials accumulated by Spofford were employed by Ben Perley Poore in compiling his monumental *Descriptive Catalogue of Government Publications of the United States, 1774-1881*, which was brought to completion and printed in 1885, it is impossible to say; Poore makes no more than a formal acknowledgment to Spofford along with a number of other people, and says nothing of the previous venture. It was another dismal instance of the withering of the proper functions of a National Library under the impossible circumstances of the old Capitol Library.

It did not require a great mind to perceive the remedy: a radical increase of the Library's available space. The departmentalization of the staff was a corollary of this, but this further step must wait upon a state of things in which separate functions could be separately housed. The crucial question could not be long in coming to mind: could the great increase of space that was obviously necessary, now that the Library had been deliberately made the recipient of several currents of automatic acquisition, be found within the walls of the Capitol, or would a sepa-

rate building be proper and necessary? The need of adequate provision for the future requirements of a Library of Congress now placed upon a vastly altered and national basis was naturally first perceived by the man primarily responsible for effecting the change: Mr. Spofford himself. He first brought it to the attention of the Congress and the Nation in his Annual Report for 1871, and there analyzed the possible alternatives of Capitol extension and new construction. This basic document must be quoted at some length:

The constant and rapid growth of the Library under my charge renders it necessary to call the attention of the committee to the emergency which will soon compel the provision of more room for books. The large additional space provided by the construction of the two wings opened in 1866 was soon nearly filled up by the almost simultaneous acquisition of the Smithsonian Library as a deposit, and the Force Historical Library, by purchase, together with the annually growing accessions of new books by copyright and purchase. Since the last session, I have had constructed and placed in the galleries about one hundred cases of shelving of light materials, as a necessary though temporary expedient, to accommodate the overflow of books in the alcoves, and to prevent their accumulation upon the floors. More than seven thousand linear feet of shelves have thus been added, besides opening a room beneath the Library for the storage of duplicates, and the expense of both these improvements has been kept within the appropriation of \$1,000 made for the purpose at the last session. But this provision, though affording temporary relief, is totally inadequate to accommodate even two years' growth of the Library, and the question recurs, where are we to look for more room? The old hall of the House of Representatives has been suggested, and it would be feasible to line the walls of that considerable space with alcoves, without encroaching upon the use of the hall as a thoroughfare, and a gallery for statuary. But the utmost gain of shelf-room from this source would, at most, accommodate only from three to five years' growth of this great collection, at the end of which time we should be confronted by the same problem, besides the disadvantage of breaking up the library into supplementary divisions, more or less remote from the central hall. There is now no suitable space for

the transaction of the heavy copyright business of the Library. . . .

These facts, with the added reflection that this Library, now closely approaching a quarter of a million of volumes, will, in twenty years, exceed half a million, and must in time become one of the largest collections of books in the world, suggest the expediency of a separate building, designed expressly for its accommodation and for the copyright business of the country. Should this be determined upon, it would still be expedient to retain in the central hall of the existing Library a sufficiently complete collection of books for a library of reference, to include copies of all the leading writers in the science and literature, as well as a full library of jurisprudence. The halls of the two wings might be appropriated as reading-rooms for periodicals, for the use of Congress, and the alcoves and galleries, with their spacious fire-proof and numbered shelving, would serve admirably for the orderly arrangement of the archives of the Senate and House of Representatives, now so inadequately provided for. That the entire Capitol building will, at no distant day, be required for legislative purposes, is apparent.

If, however, it should not be deemed expedient to build a separate edifice for the Library, there is an alternative which would retain the whole collection in the Capitol, while making provision for its increase, for at least a quarter of a century to come. This could be accomplished by extending the west front of the building, the entire central projection of which is now occupied by the Library, from 60 to 100 feet. This would afford space for library accommodation at least equal to that afforded by the present halls, while large rooms could be constructed underneath the extensions for the rapidly-accumulating copyright archives and material, the necessity of some provision for which is imperative. A spacious reading-room for periodicals might also be secured, while the western front of the Capitol, so conspicuous from the most thickly-settled portion of the city, might be made to assume for the first time an architectural appearance worthy of so noble a structure. The whole subject is recommended to the early attention of the committee.

This was Ainsworth Spofford's opening gun in what was to be a singularly protracted and wearisome battle for a National Library building. For six years his record had been one of unbroken and brilliant success; from now on it was to be largely frustration and futile labor. Could



he have foreseen, as he penned these words in December 1871, that it would be fifteen years before legislative machinery would enact and appropriate for such a building, and eleven years more before its construction would be completed—and that he, who was now at forty-six in the prime of life, would be old and grey and seventy-two before it could be occupied and the first relief obtained for his embarrassments—we may well wonder whether he would have had the fortitude to continue at his post. But when we think of his sense of duty, and of his single-minded service of his ideal, we shall probably conclude that he would have gone on just as he did, even under the burden of such ominous foreknowledge.

The story of the various legislative attempts, and their accompanying reports, surveys, and the like, and of the delays in the construction of the building, if told in any detail, would fill a space as long again as that already devoted to Mr. Spofford's administration. Much of it is of limited present-day interest and of small or no immediate relevance. We shall therefore merely indicate the principal steps, while quoting at sufficient length such significant statements as bear upon the latter issue.

By his next Annual Report, that for 1872, Spofford had further clarified his mind. He definitely rejected the alternative proposals for Capitol extension, since the best of them, his own idea of an enlargement of the western front, would provide for only 20 years' growth—one year had already passed, and books were coming in a little faster than anticipated.

Three suggestions have been made, looking toward a provision which should retain the Library in the Capitol, at least for several years to come. First, the extension of the eastern front of the central building has been repeatedly recommended by the architect . . . By no possibility could it be made to contain more than 12 to 15 years' growth of the collection (and this, with its isolation from the present library-rooms)

takes it out of the category of expedient suggestions.

(Secondly, as per last report) to extend the central building in the opposite direction westward . . . This proposition is far more reasonable than the first . . . Yet it would multiply some of the existing obstacles to convenient arrangement . . . But the chief objection to the proposed extension is, that after all possible provision of space included in it is allowed for, it would be filled with books in twenty years from the present time, when the same problem would again confront us, and a removal to a separate edifice would be necessary, while the cost of the extension would, in the opinion of the architect, be equal to that of a new library building. A third suggestion which has been made is, to build a new capitol for the legislative uses of Congress, and to devote one wing of the present edifice to the Library, and the other to judicial uses, or to the accommodation of the Supreme Court and the Court of Claims.

The third, self-evidently preposterous, suggestion Mr. Spofford had no difficulty in disposing of: the present Capitol had not been designed to house a Library, and there was no eligible site for a new Capitol. He therefore concluded, "The only remaining alternative that is perceived is to erect a wholly distinct building for the Library and copyright department," and went on to present his ideas as to what such a building should be and contain. This statement, the real genesis of the present Main Library Building, demands extensive quotation:

First of all, there should be reserved in the present central library-room, which will contain 40,000 volumes, a full legislative library for the use and reference of Congress, to embrace not only encyclopaedias, jurisprudence, and political science, but one copy of each of the leading works in every department of science and literature. This could be done without materially weakening the library, from the duplicates which are already contained in the collection. . . .

In the construction of a new building, three ruling considerations should be kept constantly in view: fire-proof materials in every part, the highest utility and convenience in the arrangement of details, and the wants of the future. In respect to the latter point, the space required for ultimate library accommodation, it would not be a wise economy of means to provide space for less

than three millions of volumes. . . . The Library of Congress has twice doubled within twelve years. . . . It will reach 700,000 volumes by the year 1900; one million and a quarter by 1925; 1,750,000 by 1950; and 2,500,000 by the year 1975, or about a century hence. Nor is so extensive a collection of books by any means so formidable an object of contemplation as many persons suppose. In every country where civilization has attained a high rank, there should be at least one great library, not only universal in its range, but whose plan it should be to reverse the rule of the smaller and more select libraries, which is exclusiveness, for one of inclusiveness.

The Library building could best be adapted to future expansion by being designed in circular form; while this suggestion was not carried out in any literal manner, it lies behind the ultimate arrangement of an octagonal reading room in the heart of the Library, with stacks fronting at first two and eventually four sides of the octagon:

Provision should be made for the present Library in as compact a space as is compatible with its constant and symmetrical enlargement. There is but one way in which room can be reserved for a library to grow in all directions, preserving a constant unity of plan, and avoiding those obstructions which split up most great collections into several libraries, to the permanent annoyance and incalculable loss of time both of officers and readers. That way is to construct the walls, at least of the interior of the library, in circular form. By this plan the books can be arranged in alcoves rising tier above tier around the whole circumference of the circle, while the desks and catalogues for the use of readers occupy the centre of the Library, and the time occupied in producing books to this common centre, through all the radii of the circle, is reduced to a minimum. . . .

The exterior walls of the building could be constructed either in circular or in quadrangular form, as should be deemed best. In the latter case, they should be built at sufficient distance from the inner circle to afford abundant space for the future introduction of supplementary iron cases for books, falling rank behind rank, and giving thus the means of attaining that cardinal desideratum of all libraries, yet never reached in any, namely, the arrangement of all accessions in close juxtaposition to their related books on similar topics. On this plan, which may be termed the expansive method of construction, the original

outlay upon the architecture of the building would be greatly less than if it were completed at once. The principal element of cost is in the great amount of material and the finishing of the iron interior, a large share of which could thus be postponed until needed for actual use.

Besides the space thus reserved for library growth, spacious apartments would be required, and could readily be constructed, for the following purposes:

1. A copyright record room, to contain all the archives of that department in convenient compass, and systematically arranged in the spot where the clerical labor connected with the copyright business is performed.

2. A map-room of spacious dimensions, in which the thousands of separate maps now accumulated and hereafter to accumulate in the Library could be thoroughly classified, catalogued, and utilized for reference at a moment's notice.

3. A department for engravings, chromos, photographs, and other works of the fine arts received under the law of copyright. These fast-accumulating stores . . . are now . . . kept in piles only partially arranged and exceedingly difficult of reference.

4. A periodical-room, in which all current files of journals, magazines, and other serials should be systematically arranged and ready for reference, until converted into books by being bound.

5. A packing-room, where all the mechanical operations of the library could be performed.

The cost of such a library building as is here roughly outlined would not, in the judgment of the Architect of the Capitol extension, exceed a million of dollars . . . It can hardly be doubted that the people of the country would sanction any careful expenditure that may be required for the protection and future increase of the great and valuable Library which is fast becoming a just source of pride to American citizens. And it is with confidence in the wisdom and far-sighted liberality of Congress that this honorable committee is now asked to recommend a suitable appropriation for the commencement of a library building, which shall be the repository of the countless memorials of the past here gathered, and hand them down to a posterity who will have far more interest in the legacy than we are aware.

As always, the Library Committee supported Spofford's far-sighted views, and there was, if some, yet very little outspoken opposition to the idea that the National Library should have a home worthy of its



destiny. But many Members of Congress were reluctant to see the Library leave a site of maximum convenience to themselves, and feared that to themselves its usefulness might be impaired were it to leave the Capitol. It was for this reason that a site on Judiciary Square (now better known as the Municipal Center), for a time favored by Mr. Spofford himself, where the land was already owned by the Government and would not have to be specially condemned and purchased, had to be abandoned. And among that majority who were perfectly reconciled to the Library leaving the Capitol it remained true, as Mr. Spofford wrote in 1895, that "the conflicts of opinion about the site, and about plans, cost, and architects, led to repeated postponements of the whole subject from year to year." Such disagreements and delays gave opponents of removal an opportunity to press counter-plans and devise new halfway measures.

The Library Committee was successful in inserting in the appropriation bill of March 3, 1873 a provision allotting \$5,000 for a plan for a new building, and creating a commission consisting of the chairman of the Library Committee, the chairman of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds of the Senate, and the Librarian of Congress, who were to select it. Specifications were drawn up by Spofford on the lines of his 1872 Report, and a competition announced, with three prizes, which elicited some 28 plans from the architectural profession. A plan was selected, and the Library Committee recommended an appropriation to commence the work on ground which they should choose. The only appropriation which was forthcoming was one of \$2,000 "to procure plans for the accommodation of the Library"—leaving the door open for projects of Capitol extension. In the course of the next decade this certainly became an over-investigated subject; as Mr. Singleton reported from

the Committee on the Library on February 23, 1884:

The necessity of a separate building for the Library has been unanimously reported by five successive joint committees of Congress charged with the investigation of the subject since 1873, when it was first proposed. There has never been a dissenting voice or a report against it in these committees. Moreover, a special commission of experts, all of whom were architects, reported unanimously in 1880 that no enlargement of the Capitol could accommodate the Library even for a generation, but that a separate building was a necessity. These experts were Edward Clark, Architect of the Capitol, chairman; Mr. John L. Smithmeyer, of Washington, and Mr. Alexander Esty, of Boston.

And so Mr. Singleton's Committee went on unanimously to recommend the same thing! In spite of which, Senate Bill No. 1139 failed to become a law.

In 1876 the Library Committee, whose report was delivered by Senator Timothy O. Howe, was most emphatic in its recommendation of a separate building as a necessity for Congress itself:

It is absurd, it seems almost insane, if not wicked, for the Congress of the United States, charged with the duty of making laws for a constituency numbering already more than forty millions, stretched across a continent, employed in every avocation known among men, gathered from every nationality on the earth, embracing every type of civilization, and many a type of barbarism, to deny to itself, or to be denied, any available means of qualifying itself for its supreme duty. . . . From this political point of view it is, therefore, safe to assert that no expenditure should be begrudged which is necessary to place within the reach of Congress whatever of instruction can be gathered from books.

Nevertheless, the Committee made a tactical error; they declared that an expenditure of from a half to a whole million dollars for ground adjacent to the Capitol was not justified, and asked for a removal of the Botanic Garden to other public land, and the construction of the new Library upon its site. Unfortunately, when the site was inspected, it was

found too boggy to support any such construction as the new Library building would have to be. In 1878 the Secretary of the Interior, the Honorable Carl Schurz, was called upon to ascertain the probable cost, by purchase or condemnation, of the properties adjoining the Capitol grounds on the north, east, and south. This task he executed with characteristic and praiseworthy thoroughness; he and his agents made an exhaustive survey of the 1876 and 1878 valuations on eighteen city blocks, and obtained from every landowner who would reply a statement of the sum for which he would sell. On January 20, 1879, Samuel S. Cox introduced a bill into the House, giving effect to this information, by providing for the purchase of parcels of land on the south side of the Capitol; this evoked *three* amendments from his colleagues, of which two were in favor of Judiciary Square, and one of the east side of the Capitol!

In 1880, another bill for a joint select committee on the site was brought into the Senate, and Senator Voorhees, the vigorous chairman of the Library Committee, made it the occasion for a plea that the Capitol extension idea be threshed out once and for all:

I cheerfully concurred in this bill, and reported it, in order that I, and others knowing no more than I do, might be instructed by skilled persons in architecture, whether the proposed new structure for the Library can, with a due regard to the fitness of things, be attached to the Capitol. It is necessary to determine that question before we can move on.

The controversy growing out of it must be eliminated from the situation or we will remain at a stand-still until some great disaster overtakes the Library. It is true that I cannot perceive how sufficient space can be planned for the Library of the future in connection with the Capitol without marring its symmetry, but if experts can I will be glad of it. There are 11,600 square feet of floor for books, about one-fourth of an acre in space, in the present Library rooms. There are 110,000 square feet for the same purpose in the Library of the British Museum,

about two acres and a half, and it is absolutely certain that the Library of Congress will require at least a similar space within the next ten years. How such an area can be properly incorporated into this Capitol I do not at all comprehend, and for that reason I want this bill passed at once as the only fair and satisfactory way of putting an end to controversy and of securing action . . . It will settle and put behind us a vexed question which is now an invincible obstruction to the wishes, purposes, and duties of this body.

It was in this speech of May 5, 1880, that Daniel Wolsey Voorhees bore his strongest witness to the National Library idea. He put the Library of the United States on a level with the other great national collections of the world:

It is very safe to estimate that in the next 16 years the contents of the Library will be swollen to six times their present proportions. This will make a collection of about 2,250,000 volumes, a much larger one than now exists anywhere. The National Library, Paris, has now 2,000,000 volumes, the British Museum 1,150,000, and the Imperial Library, Saint Petersburg, 1,100,000. Looking back upon the centuries it has taken them to make these accumulations, it is clear to my mind that they will soon be outstripped by their young rival, the Library of the United States. This will certainly be the case unless we deliberately cripple the growth of an institution which it should be our care and pride to foster and sustain.

And his peroration led Senators to link the Library of Congress with liberty, civilization, and immortality:

The physical man must grow old, his hair must whiten, and his face bear the furrows of years; his step must falter and his hand grow feeble. Not necessarily so with the intellectual man. The mind fed at the crystal fountains of accumulated knowledge will continue its youth, its growth, and its expansion until it makes its final transition to a sphere of endless and unlimited development. Let us therefore give this great national library our love and our care. Nothing can surpass it in importance. Knowledge is power, the power to maintain free government and preserve constitutional liberty. Without it the world grows dark and the human race takes up its backward march to the regions of barbarism.

The report of the commission of architects,



Clark, Smithmeyer, and Esty, which was the consequence of this measure, would have killed the Capitol extension idea if this had been possible by rational means. But it went on, and in 1882 assumed quite the wackiest of its Protean forms. Someone had evolved, and brought before the existing joint select committee, the notion of hoisting the dome of the Capitol into the air so that the Library could be accommodated in the space it had vacated! The committee, through Mr. Spofford, appealed to old General Montgomery C. Meigs, who had been the engineer of the Capitol extension of 1853-59.

Mr. Spofford, who must have found this a very sour duty, addressed to him, on March 9, 1882, some very leading questions:

SIR: I am desired by the chairman of the Joint Select Committee on Additional Accommodations for the Library of Congress to request your views regarding a proposed plan for raising the dome of the Capitol 50 feet, in order to secure additional space in and near the rotunda for the Library. The points concerning which your judgment is requested may be embodied in the following queries:

1. Will the old *foundations*, being constructed for a building of 69 feet in height, be able to stand the additional weight of a superincumbent structure of another 50 feet height?

...

5. What is your opinion of the scheme of bodily raising the dome 50 feet higher, especially in view of the fact that its foundation is 117 feet below the base of it proper? And what is your opinion of taking it to pieces and putting it up again?

6. Could that scheme (provided it were otherwise practical) be executed without demolishing the entire old or center part of the Capitol building? Is it a practical scheme or a visionary one?

The veteran engineer was not to be drawn into pronouncing it a visionary scheme, but he did affirm that it was not prudent to put such an additional load either upon the walls under the dome or the sandstone columns of the old Capitol. He furthermore declared that the Capitol was an

esthetic whole as it stood, and could only be spoiled by further alterations.

The resources of argument had been exhausted, and there was nothing that the friends of the measure could do save keep it on foot until a favorable conjunction of congressional affairs should come about. President Arthur noted in his annual message of December 6, 1881, that "the provision of suitable protection for this great collection of books, and for the copyright department connected with it, has become a subject of national importance and should receive prompt attention." Before the House on December 12, 1882, Thomas Brackett Reed admonished his colleagues:

This nation has become great enough to meet the expectations of this people. Among these expectations is the establishment of a library large enough for the needs of the whole of this great nation. On this continent there ought to be one library where everything is . . . Economy is not the refusal to spend anything. It is a refusal to spend money unwisely, and there has been no nation, no municipality, no collection of people that ever was civilized enough to have a library that did not realize they ought to have a place suitable for it.

On February 7, 1884, Senator Justin S. Morrill, characterizing the Library as "the property of the nation, open to all the people without any ticket of admission," reminded the Congress that "its custody is intrusted to our honor and our enlightened sense of propriety. Our duty is obvious, and its neglect can not escape reproach." Five days later Senator Thomas F. Bayard spoke to the same effect:

I trust that the present measure is now about to take the form of law, in order that we shall at least see the beginning of that which we all recognize as a duty, and that is the construction of a safe, suitable and worthy building for the preservation of the books of the American people.

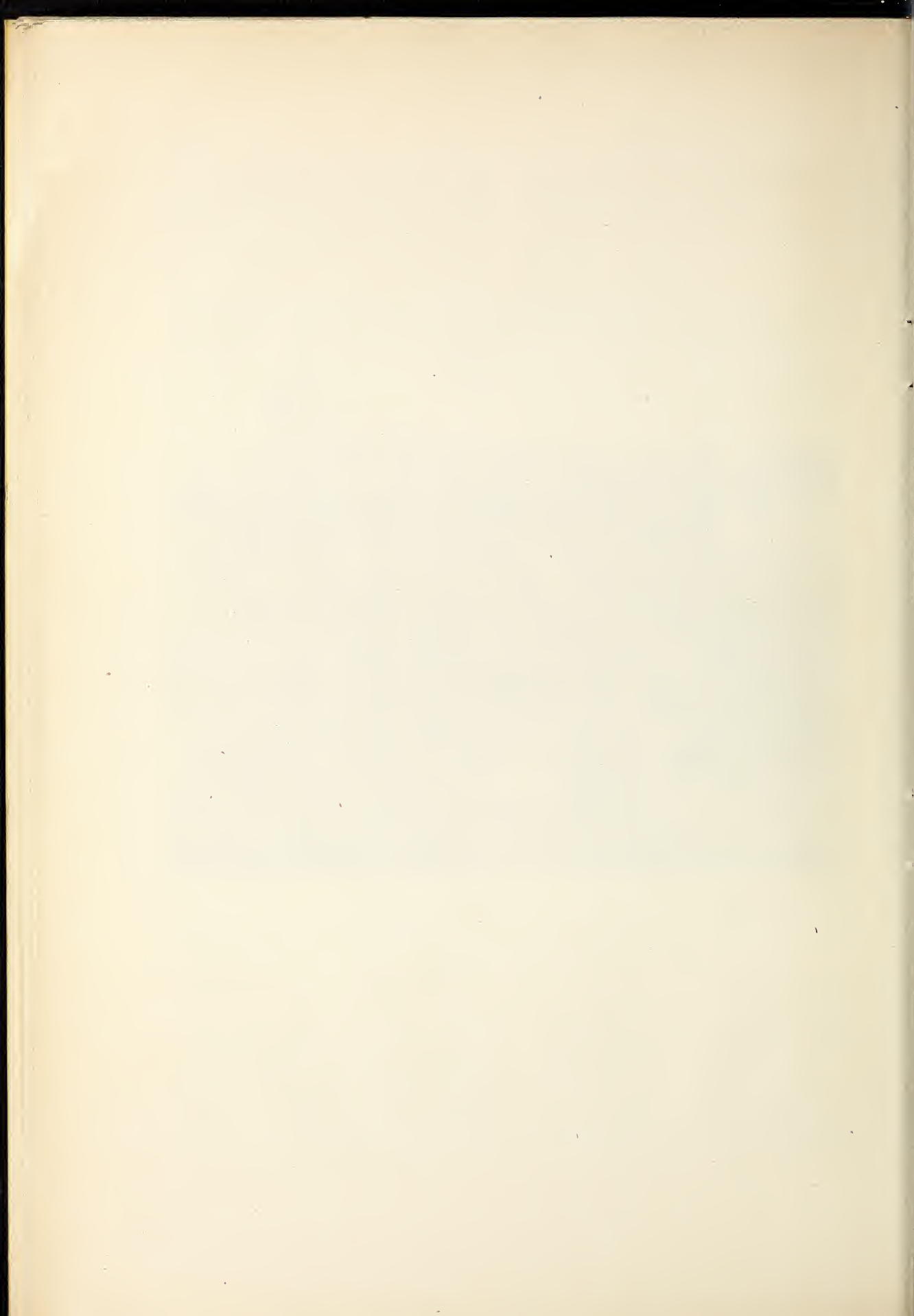
At last, on April 15, 1886, it happened.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That a fire-proof building, for the accommodation*



*Construction of the Main Building of the Library of Congress, which required eight years, from 1889 to 1897, is pictured here at an early stage. Of monumental structure and artistic perfection even to minute details, the building was erected under the direction of Brigadier General Thomas Lincoln Casey, Chief of Engineers, United States Army.*





of the Library of Congress, shall be erected east of the Capitol . . . as the commission hereinafter provided shall determine; and the construction of said building, substantially according to the plan submitted to the Joint Select Committee on Additional Accommodations for the Library of Congress, by John L. Smithmeyer, in the Italian renaissance style of architecture, . . . shall be in charge of a commission composed of the Secretary of the Interior, the Architect of the Capitol Extension and the Librarian of Congress . . . and the sum of five hundred thousand dollars is hereby appropriated to commence the construction of said building.

But the building could not actually begin without an additional appropriation for the purchase of land; and one of the very few private letters of Mr. Spofford's which we have shows his personal share in getting this over the hurdle:

Aug. 5, 1886. To-day I have had a hard day's work, and at times a hurried and anxious one. It grew out of this being the last day of Congress, and the great importance to the Library Commission of getting through the \$35,000 appropriation to make certain the immediate progress of the building. I was on the floor of the House three hours, and Secretary Lamar was there about two hours, watching its chances, removing objections, taking care of Holman, McMillan, Blount and others—for a single member's objection would have killed it at any stage. Randall had made known his intention not to oppose it, and his belief that it would go through. . . . At last after running the gauntlet for the better part of the session, a favorable moment was seized, and the bill got through by unanimous consent! Speaker Carlisle was favorable or it would not have got a chance. At once I hurried it back to the Senate to be enrolled—got the signatures of Sherman and Carlisle, and was made special messenger to carry the bill to the White House for the President's signature. This goal was reached at 3.10 P. M. and both Houses had resolved to adjourn *sine die* at 4. Mr. Cleveland was at lunch, but I sent the bill down to him by Mr. Pruden, the Secretary, and it came back in fifteen minutes with Grover Cleveland's name "approved." This saved the day—and I am again the happiest man in Washington—the last obstacle in the way of the Library Building being removed.

With the circumstances that made the

construction of the new Library of Congress the slow work of more than a decade we are not here concerned. They were for Mr. Spofford simply a period of marking time, as the situation continued to deteriorate. Only one important change took place during this period: the enactment of an international copyright law, approved March 3, 1891, and effective July 1, 1891. This extended the protection of the American copyright law to authors and artists of foreign citizenship, so long as their books, photographs, chromos and lithographs were manufactured in the United States. It added to the embarrassment of the Library and the Librarian in three ways: it increased the influx of materials, not so much in books, but in musical compositions and works of art; it entailed a foreign correspondence; and it imposed the duty of transmitting to the Treasury Department for publication there, a weekly catalog of all publications entered for copyright. But no new clerical help was given to the Librarian, and a Register of Copyrights to take the burden from his shoulders was not provided.

At length the new Library of Congress was ready for occupation, and a new era of the National Library could begin. Mr. Spofford, in his last Annual Report as Librarian, included a brief note of congratulation:

The completion, since the last annual report of the undersigned, of the commodious and beautiful new Library building is a proper subject of congratulation to Congress and to the American people. Planned throughout with a view to the accommodation and prompt service of a great library collection in all its departments, its utility may be said to have realized the chief end of library architecture, while the beauty of the edifice, both in its exterior walls and interior decorations (all by American artists) appeals eminently to the public taste.

Congratulations to you, Ainsworth Spofford!



*The Hearing*

As the new building for the Library neared completion, Congress saw a clear necessity for careful examination into legislative measures which might be required to set it going properly in its changed setting. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Senate on May 5, 1896, provided

That the Joint Committee on the Library of the House of Representatives and of the Senate be authorized to sit in Washington, District of Columbia, during the recess of Congress, for the purpose of inquiring into the condition of the Library of Congress, and to report upon the same at the next session of Congress, with such recommendations as may be deemed advisable; also to report a plan for the organization, custody, and management of the new Library building and the Library of Congress.

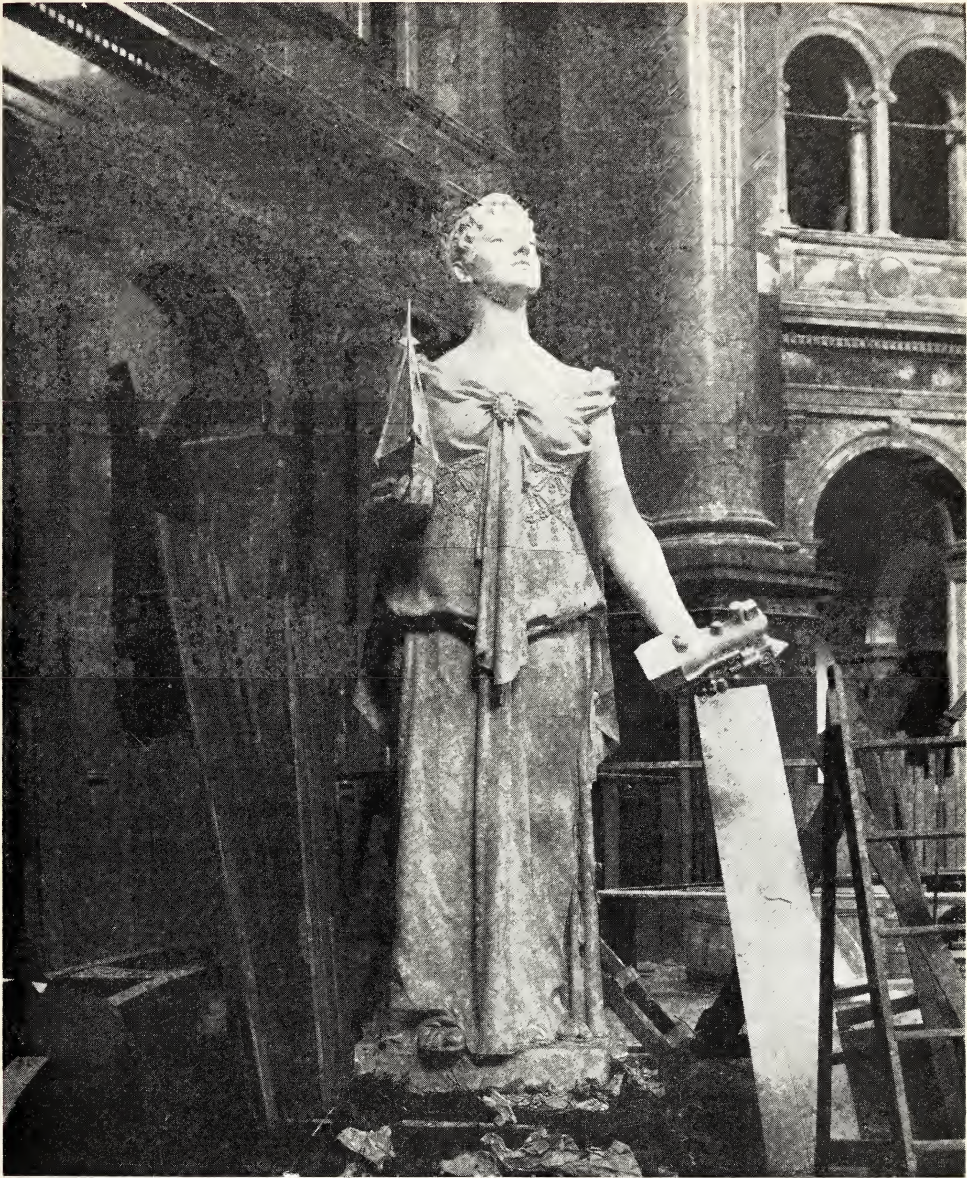
With Senator George Peabody Wetmore in the chair, the Joint Committee held sessions between November 16 and December 7, 1896, calling in for testimony not only the Librarian of Congress, Ainsworth R. Spofford, but such distinguished figures in the library world as Melvil Dewey, Herbert Putnam, and George H. Baker. Its hearings were not published until March 1897, by which time the appropriations bill for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1898, had gone into effect, nullifying in substance, much of the Joint Committee's supervisory authority over the Library's affairs. For this reason the Committee declined to offer the plan of organization and management which it had been commissioned to prepare. However, a reading of the discussions in Congress upon the appropriations bill offers ample indication that its provisions must have been based at least in part upon the testimony brought out by the Joint Committee and by statements of Mr. Spofford, which, though not officially recorded in print, must clearly have paralleled what he said in these hearings. Hence it is possible to

see the outlines of a picture of how and why the Library was set upon its new path, by reviewing amply reported sessions of the Joint Committee.

After learning in detail of the progress of the Library's construction from Bernard R. Green, superintendent of the new building, the Committee called on Mr. Spofford to give a sketch of the Library's history and an account of his stewardship. Representative Quigg, of New York, himself a distinguished editor (who led the questioning throughout the Committee's sessions) went over the existing structure and operations of the Library in considerable detail. Mr. Spofford recited the difficulties he had experienced in caring for a collection which had mounted to 740,000 printed volumes, together with a considerable number of prints, maps, periodicals, and manuscripts, in the cramped quarters of the Capitol, assisted by a staff of only forty-two people, twenty-four of whom had to be used full-time on the ever-increasing business of copyright. Lacking personnel to administer his collections in an ideally scientific fashion he had been compelled to adopt methods which would best meet the necessities of the moment. "The organization of the library," he declared, "is a subjective one, and not governed by any Procrustean system of classification. I think that the best system in classifying a library is that which produces a book in the shortest time to one who wants it. I would ride over all rules that interfere with that promptitude of service." Uniformity of classification and cataloging did not then exist among the great book collections in the United States and it was Mr. Spofford's proud claim that the system he had personally devised despite technical imperfections, was one which could produce any needed volume "inside of five or ten minutes."

Upon taking office in 1864 Mr. Spofford had found that he had inherited a library





*Allegorical figure of Commerce, by the sculptor John Flanagan. This striking photograph of one of the figures which now decorate the base of the dome in the Main Reading Room was taken immediately after its unpacking, in the final stage of construction of the Main Library Building.*





classified according to the Baconian system of knowledge (as adapted to the purpose by Mr. Jefferson), which was suitable enough for philosophical or scientific or educational objects but was not in his opinion of really practical value for a great book collection. He had therefore reorganized and revised it, bringing together books closely related in content and shelving them in as nearly alphabetical an arrangement as could be devised within their subject divisions. (Not the least of his difficulties was the fact that he had shelf room for only 400,000 volumes, requiring the use of much storage space in the Capitol basement for the overflow.) In his classification scheme there were forty-four "chapters," comprising such diverse categories as periodicals, transactions of scientific and literary societies (the Smithsonian collection), literary curiosities, philology, bibliography, oratory, literature published in the form of letters, the drama, music, fine arts, architecture, books relating to the black arts and popular delusions, the newly isolated "social sciences," philosophy, political science, law, the natural sciences, and technology. Certain categories necessarily overlapped; others performed surgery upon a particular author. Thus, writings of John Ruskin might be found in chapters 41 (essays, criticisms, and miscellaneous compositions), 40 (polygraphic, or collected works of authors), 31 (fine arts), and 30 (architecture). However, Mr. Spofford explained, an attendant thoroughly familiar with the Library's subject scheme of arrangement, and nimble in movement from one location to another, might locate any volume without too great delay. When the Library was moved to its spacious new home and a better shelving system could be achieved there would be opportunity for even speedier service to readers.

In addition to nearly three quarters of a million books under his supervision,

Mr. Spofford cited the very extensive collection of bound and unbound periodicals which had been accumulated over many years, numbering some 18,000 volumes of newspapers together with a great mass of reviews and magazines. Some 200,000 musical scores and songs were in the Library, unremittingly augmented by copyright at the rate of about 15,000 a year. The graphic arts were represented by an estimated 250,000 pieces, including engravings, etchings, photographs, lithographs, and wood cuts. Charts and maps numbered more than 40,000 items, many of them dating from the time of the Revolution and exceedingly rare. The manuscript collections, though not very extensive, included the papers gathered by Peter Force and J. M. Toner, the correspondence of John Paul Jones, Robert Fulton, and Rochambeau, a Revolutionary journal of George Washington, and stray pieces bearing on the Spanish colonies in America. Among the newspaper and periodical rarities were a complete file of the *London Gazette* from 1655 on, the only one in the United States; a full run of the *London Times* from 1796, the *Journal des Débats* from 1789, and the *Allgemeine Zeitung* from its beginning in 1798; and—next to the American Antiquarian Society's collection—the largest existing gathering of American newspapers prior to 1800. Removal of the Library to its new building would offer a long-denied opportunity of exhibiting rare materials like these to public view.

After a brief interlude during which Samuel P. Langley and Cyrus Adler were called upon to describe the collections and method of administration of the Smithsonian Institution, the Joint Committee brought back Mr. Spofford for further testimony, questioning him particularly about the added personnel and equipment he would need to service the Library properly in its new location. For his own



staff he estimated that seventy-four persons would be required, including a superintendent, twelve assistants, and ten attendants for the reading rooms and a chief and seven helpers for the catalog section; he felt that the head of the copyright department should have at least thirty clerks under him; and he requested seventy-eight persons under the supervision of a superintendent for the care, custody, and maintenance of the Library building. This was to be regarded as a minimum staff, to be increased in size as later necessity arose.

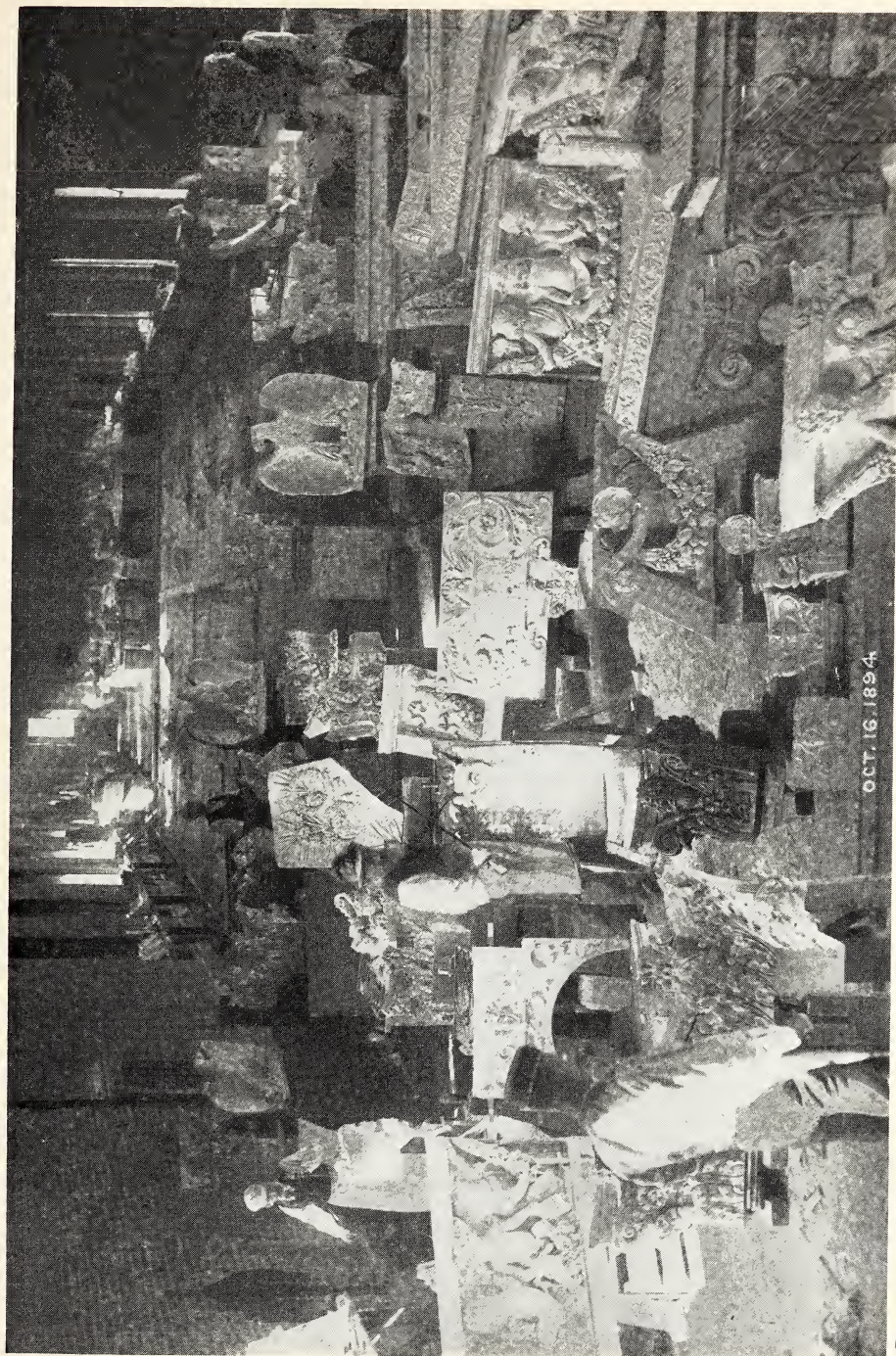
Representative Quigg then raised the important question of whether "a more intimate relation by law between the Librarian and the Joint Committee with regard to the employment of his force, the auditing of his accounts . . . the purchase of the books, and the accommodations of the Library generally, would be of any public interest?" Mr. Spofford offered as his opinion that the Committee should have more direct relationship to the Librarian in regard both to the selection and purchase of books and the auditing of accounts, particularly in view of large anticipated increases in appropriations for increase of the Library's collections. "It has long been a matter of great regret to me," he declared, "that the successive committees have not taken more interest in those matters which pertain to an increase of the Library, to the proper selection of all accessions made by purchase at home and abroad, and to the catalogue system of the Library, which has fallen into arrears, owing to the absence of appropriations by Congress." It was his first judgment, which would need to be tested by experience, that a system of employment "might work well" which would place the Joint Committee in substantial control of appointments, to be made upon the recommendation of the Librarian, the Registrar of Copyrights, and the building super-

intendent, and which might allow these officials in their turn the power of removal in case of unsatisfactory performance. This plan of administration, outlined for Mr. Spofford's consideration by Representative Quigg, was to figure more prominently in later discussions by the House on the appropriations bill.

Mr. Spofford's concluding testimony dealt chiefly with copyright business, which had mounted from 48,908 registrations in 1891 to 67,572 in 1895 and would undoubtedly continue to increase at a high rate for many years. By devoting a majority of his small staff to the work he had managed to keep essential records from going into arrears, although there had been some lag in banking of proceeds from copyright fees, in preparation of indexes, and in final recording of musical compositions, prints, syndicated articles, and ephemera. In his belief, the copyright business should now be placed in charge of a separate officer responsible for the employees under him, but its physical liaison with the Library of Congress ought to be retained.

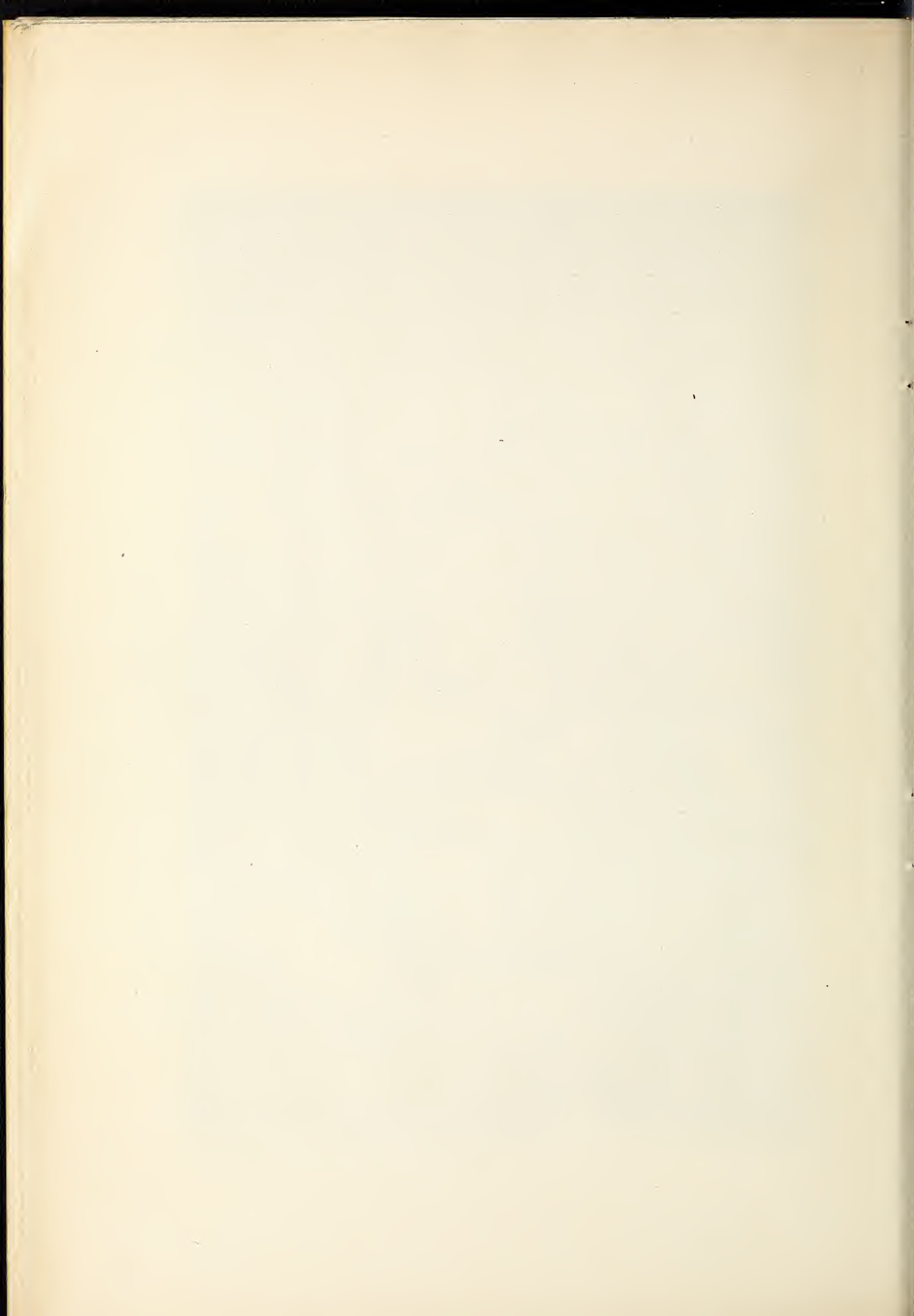
One of the distinguished librarians upon whom the Joint Committee called for testimony was Melvil Dewey, who was then occupying the position of secretary of the University of the State of New York, a federation of institutions of that State devoted to the promotion of higher education. Mr. Dewey was encouraged to speak at length on what he thought the Library of Congress might achieve if accepted as a national institution. It was his feeling "that we shall never accomplish our best results in librarianship till we can have at the National Library in Washington a center to which the libraries of the whole country can turn for inspiration, guidance, and practical help, which can be rendered so economically and efficiently in no other possible way." A well-made catalog was the first and fundamental





*Decorative work for the new Library building. Taken October 16, 1894, this photograph shows marble cutters and other artisans preparing material which later was embodied in the friezes and other ornamentation of the Main Building.*





need, with proper accessioning and shelf-listing records as necessary corollaries. Foreshadowing accurately certain practices which were to be adopted not long afterwards, he declared:

We have perhaps 4,000 public libraries in the country of 1,000 volumes or more. If a book is published that 500 of these libraries will buy, where can you think of a greater waste than that every one of the 500 should have to undertake, each for itself . . . to catalogue that book when it has been already catalogued in the National Library by the most expert staff in the country . . . Printing is very cheap. Any library willing to pay the cost of paper and postage could have a copy of these cards furnished without extra expense to the Government, which has already paid for making its own cards.

In many other respects Mr. Dewey pointed to developments dreamed of by librarians for many years which were to come to gradual realization in the later Library of Congress. He envisioned, for example, a national center in the Library to which any scholar might write for information in books or extracts copied from them—the future reference and photocopying services. He thought the Library should function as a central bureau for distribution of government publications. He believed it should become the key point in the country for dissemination of bibliographical information, that it should not only list books on a certain subject but should have qualified specialists on its staff who would guide readers to the most trustworthy books that could be had; and the National Union Catalog, though it did not stem from his suggestion, certainly finds implicit expression in his brief statement that “Every library in the United States—yes, every student, should feel free to write or telephone or telegraph to the National Library and have a prompt response as to any book on any subject, if here; and if not, information in what library it could be found . . .” He thought that the Library should arrange to

lend books all over the country which could not be located by ordinary means—rare volumes excepted, of course. In sum, he believed that it should exercise its proper functions as the great National Library, which “the public feels that this really ought to be . . . not simply the Library of Congress, which it understands to be for the direct daily use of the Senate and House.”

Another gentleman of high standing upon whom the Committee called for advice was Herbert Putnam, librarian of the Boston Public Library, the largest institution of its kind in America at the time. Endorsing Mr. Dewey's statements in most respects, he added that the new Library might take on the responsibility of serving other American libraries in international exchanges, and at the same time lend its influence toward getting them to adopt uniform systems in such fields as indexing, bibliographical work, and inter-library loans. It should pursue bibliographical work on a large scale and should assume other functions falling properly within its scope as the central library of the whole Nation: in acquisitions, for example, it need not strain its limited funds toward securing material of purely local interest which another library might be better equipped to handle, but instead should concentrate on such broad groups of printed matter as the actual legislation of the United States and other countries, all material entered in America by copyright, and Americana in general.

The speakers who appeared before the Joint Committee held varying opinions on how the administration of the Library and its personnel should be constituted. Mr. Spofford, as has been mentioned, thought that staff appointments might be placed under the Joint Committee's control, with the Librarian empowered both to make recommendations for positions and to discharge on his own authority



those persons who proved unsatisfactory. Bernard R. Green concurred in this view for appointments to the custodial and maintenance staff of the building. Melvil Dewey believed in centering responsibility in the Librarian, under the supervision not of the Joint Committee but of a board of regents composed of Members of Congress and of private citizens representing educational interests. Mr. Putnam felt that the Librarian or director might be given the power to make his appointments if it be guaranteed that he have freedom from political control in selection; if not, a civil service examination system would perhaps be preferable, though it too had its defects. George H. Baker, librarian of Columbia University, advocated a board of trustees to supervise the Librarian, preferably one composed of men experienced in bibliothecal administration. William I. Fletcher, librarian of Amherst College, believed that there should be a change from management of the Library by the Joint Committee, but that plans would have to be worked out by lengthy study, the first step towards which should be the appointment of a "chief executive officer" of high administrative ability. Rutherford P. Hayes, secretary of the American Library Association, favored the idea of government by a supervisory board of regents, commissioners, or trustees.

Before it adjourned on December 7, 1896, the Joint Committee recalled Mr. Spofford, asking him to present comparisons between the building and condition of the Library of Congress and other national libraries. During the course of this brief testimony Mr. Spofford reported that he had revised his estimates of personnel needs to provide for seventeen employees in the cataloging section, instead of the eight for which he had previously asked. This would give greater opportunity to perform the tremendous

task of making proper accession and shelf-list records, and to begin a catalog by subjects for the entire Library.

On December 15, 1896, Representative Henry Harrison Bingham, of Pennsylvania, holder of the Congressional Medal of Honor for distinguished gallantry in the Battle of the Wilderness, for the Committee on Appropriations, submitted to the House of Representatives H. R. 9643, providing for the legislative, executive, and judicial expenses of the Government during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1898. It was read and referred to the Committee of the Whole. The particular provisions bearing on the Library came up first for discussion on December 17. Following recommendations of Mr. Spofford and the Joint Committee, they proposed an increase in the Library's personnel from 43 to 187, thus creating 144 new appointments. It was further provided that these would be made by the Librarian upon the basis of special aptitude for the work to be performed and under such rules as he might prescribe. There were a number of other specifications, but it was upon the latter that the ensuing discussion in the House was chiefly based.

### *Si Monumentum Requiris Circumspice*

There were, in the situation as it existed at the beginning of 1897, those flaky elements which are, sometimes, mistaken for the primordial. There was a sense of freshness, a feeling of re-beginning, a climate of impending and radical change. The Library, which Congress had founded nearly a century before, which Congress had sustained and dignified and developed until now it had become not only a public possession but a public resource was on the verge of newness. Across the plaza, eastward from the Capitol, on the site where Congressman Lincoln, of Illinois, had lodged in the house of Mrs. Sprigg; where earlier James Madison's lady had

danced at the gayest of gay balls; and where once the herds of Daniel Carroll, of Duddington, had found pasture for their grazing; a new building, largest in the world to be designed exclusively for such a purpose, was nearing completion and soon would house the Library which itself was Congress built. And soon this Library would have not only a new home, but a new constitution for its government as well. Persons interested in discovering what it was and what it had become, would have done well to follow Kit Wren's injunction to look about them. But if they had looked hard and fixedly, they would have seen, beyond the granite and the utterances "on the floor," two ancient factors, strong and honored and prevailing: a great collection and a great tradition. There were few who did.

In January, the columns of *The Library Journal*, "the official organ of the American Library Association," were filled with forebodings. The editorial, on the first page, began: "The future of the national library in its new home is really the library question of the year." It considered "the removal of the books the first critical point, because this removal gives opportunity for rearrangement and organization which can outline the methods of the library for years to come, or for mismanagement which will result in a general muddle that cannot be straightened out for years." And there was the temperament of the Librarian:

Mr. Spofford has been so busy with the mass of detail which he has undertaken to handle that he has not trained himself as an executive for this kind of work, nor been able to keep in touch with the modern developments of library organization and practice. Nor has he benefited, as was to be hoped, by recent experience; to cite a single instance, copyright checks are still unbanked and used, without proper safeguards, to pay off the minor bills of the Library. It will be cruel to load him down with this additional work until he frees himself from some of the old detail, and even his own recommendation for the separation

of the copyright office has not yet been made effective. Mr. Spofford is understood to desire the association with himself of a board of direction, which could give more continuous attention to the interests of the library than one made up of congressmen alone, and in the present critical time he should certainly be supplemented either by a commission of practical and experienced men, who should stand alongside him in planning or providing for the work of removal and reorganization, or be given executive associates who would do this work in consultation with him.

As for the Joint Committee on the Library, the *Journal* felt that it had done "some good work in the short time which it could utilize, and gave hearings to a number of librarians designated either by the president of the A. L. A. or cited by the committee itself." But—

It is unfortunate that after Congress had specially authorized this committee to provide for the future organization of the library, conflict should have arisen from the side of the appropriations committee. . . . That this library will ultimately become in name as it is in fact the national library is beyond doubt, and the failure to recognize now this manifest destiny and to provide now on the large scale which this implies will be nothing short of a national misfortune. . . . The national library of America should have the benefit of the best experience from national libraries abroad, of the widest range of professional cooperation at home, and of the largest foresight on the part of its governing body, if it is to be worthily representative of this great people.

The same issue of the *Journal* contained, as its principal article, a review of recent legislative history entitled *A Congressional or a National Library?* After reviewing Mr. Spofford's ill-starred efforts to secure a separation of copyright registry from the management of the Library and lamenting the failure of Congress to anticipate the costs of removing the collections from the Capitol to the new building, it reviewed conditions in terms of their present status. It would be interesting to ascertain the date of the completion of this account because the appropriation bill had been introduced in the House on December 15, 1896, where it was passed exactly one week



later; it was introduced in the Senate on January 18, 1897 where it was amended and passed on January 20 and sent to conference; the Senate agreed to the conference report on February 15; the House accepted it on February 17; and President Cleveland gave approval on February 19. Copies of the January number of the *Journal* were received in the Library of Congress on January 27 and the article was written sometime between the passage of the bill in the House and its introduction in the Senate. But because the article contains information not derivable from the official documents (which are the basis of the account of the charter in the preceding chapter), because the Joint Committee never got around to offering a bill and because it reflects the professional attitude toward the Library's place and position in the intellectual life of the American people, the following extensive extracts possess more than casual importance:

The question of . . . [the Library's administration] was . . . given over for farther consideration to the joint committee on the library, which was empowered, for this object, to sit during the recess, and give hearings on the subject. It was before this committee, shortly before the present session of Congress began, that the American Library Association gave its expert testimony through Messrs. Brett, Hayes, Dewey, Fletcher, Putnam, Soule, and Baker. This testimony is to be printed with the report of the committee, and will form interesting reading. Unfortunately, the bill which contains the appropriations for the library had to be brought in before the report and testimony of the joint committee was ready. The joint committee, therefore, was obliged to describe to the appropriations committee the plan which they expected to recommend, in order that appropriations might be made to correspond.

Their recommendations, in brief, were these: That a director . . . was to be appointed in the usual manner for heads of departments, namely, by "The President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate." That a chief librarian at \$4,000, and a registrar of copyrights at \$3,000, were each to serve under the director, but were to be appointed by the joint committee, as, also,

each and every subordinate in the library staff, copyright staff, or custodian of the building's office were to be. This manner of appointment was afterwards amended by the committee's adding to the clause, "by the joint committee on the library," the words "on the recommendation of the director of the library." . . . The joint committee was also to be empowered to make all rules and regulations for the care of the building and the conduct of the library. During the intervals between the expiration of one Congress and the assembling of the next one it was provided that a temporary joint committee should be appointed, on the side of the House, by the Speaker, to hold over and govern the library in the interregnum.

The joint committee on the library, with its changing *personnel*, was thus constituted the permanent board of control of the library, to oversee, exactly as do the trustees of public and endowed libraries, the management of the librarian. This scheme for the management of the Library of Congress unfortunately did not meet with the approval of the committee on appropriations, especially the provision that all appointments except that of the director should be made by the joint committee. The appropriations committee, accordingly, introduced a bill with different provisions from those proposed by the joint committee, and forced the latter committee to offer their proposition as a substitute, throwing on them the burden of proof.

The main difference in the appropriation committee's proposition was that the librarian, who is to have the \$6,000 salary, the \$4,000 official being termed his chief assistant, is to be appointed as formerly, by the President solely. The librarian, instead of a director, is to have charge of all branches of the work, making all appointments, including those of copyright work and the care of the building. . . . In every other respect, especially as regards the number of employees, their bill coincides with that proposed by the joint committee, and they say it gives everything in that line asked for by Mr. Green and Mr. Spofford. They make the claim also that their bill makes no changes in existing law, leaving the present management to continue as it is.

So far as the House of Representatives is concerned, to leave things as they are, rather than to create a joint committee a board of trustees to make appointments and regulations in the library, seemed to find favor, and was approved by a majority of 85 to 27. . . . The grounds on which this vote was given were the following: It was argued that to add to the appointment of the

librarian, which is now by the President solely, the necessity of confirmation by the Senate, would put it under the control of politics, while it was desirable to make it a life tenure. . . .

Again, it was argued that the joint committee was too changing a body to make regulations and appointments for a service in which it was desirable to secure long tenure. It was declared also that the head of the library was shorn of all control of his subordinates by being divested of all power of dismissal. Another weighty argument was that the appointment of 186 employees was too large an amount of patronage to give over to the joint committee. . . .

That it is to be a National Library is surely the only ground on which the country has allowed Congress to spend \$7,000,000 on its building, as Congress cannot need such accommodations for its own use solely. It is the only justifiable ground for requiring authors to contribute two copies of each work, as it would not be equitable to take this property from individuals of the nation unless it was to be the property of the nation, not solely of the Congressional body. It is the ground on which rests the popular interest in it, which causes information about the Library in newspapers and periodicals to be eagerly scanned and sought for. It was the ground on which the American Library Association takes deep interest in its having liberal appropriations and a good administration. And a National Library it should be. . . . Let Congress give the nation a library and not only a monument of stone.

In the discussion in the House, Representative Alexander Monroe Dockery, of Missouri, by profession a physician, had taken the stand that the Library of Congress "is a great national Library and belongs to the Government of the United States"; in the eyes of the people it was an executive bureau and it should be presided over by an executive officer with power to appoint and remove his employees. To take this function out of the Librarian's hands would paralyze the Library's usefulness; "in all seriousness," he urged, "in organizing this great library in that gorgeous new building, let us not make the grave mistake of also organizing a scramble for 187 offices to be disposed of under the direction and control of the joint committee of the two Houses of

Congress, to the detriment of the public service."

A number of amendments were introduced in the Senate, but among those accepted when the bill was considered on January 20, the following were the most important:

For Librarian, \$5,000—

And to insert:

For Librarian of Congress, to be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, \$5,000; and the Librarian shall make rules and regulations for the government of the Library of Congress, to be approved by the Joint Committee on the Library.

On page 20, line 5, after the word "work" to strike out "and the custody and care of the new Library building, and only under such rules as the Librarian of Congress may prescribe;" so as to read:

For the following, to be selected by the Librarian of Congress, by reason of special aptitude for the work of the Library, including the copyright work, namely, etc.

These amendments did not meet with the concurrence of the House, and on January 22 the bill went to conference. The result of this—reported to the Senate on February 15 and in the House on February 17—was that the amendment subjecting rules made by the Librarian to the Joint Committee's approval was struck out. Representative Dockery offered these final remarks before the House passed the bill:

The bill as amended and now submitted by the conference committee gives the Joint Committee on the Library no supervision of the regulations to be made by the Librarian. It puts the Librarian in control of the Library force, charges him with the responsibility for the proper conduct of the office, and gives him sole power of appointment . . . The bill as now agreed upon requires the incoming President on or after the first of July next to appoint, subject to confirmation by the Senate, a Librarian, who shall conduct the operations of the Library in the magnificent new Library building . . . I believe that our great national Library should be systematically conducted, and in harmony with new and improved methods. I sincerely hope that the President-elect



will select someone for Librarian solely with reference to his fitness to discharge the duties of that great office.

Finally, the conference report, as adopted, provided for Senate confirmation of the Librarian's appointment.

But there were men like the retiring Wilkinson Call, Senator from Florida, who took issue with the bill. He was, he informed his colleagues, aware of the "somewhat general indifference to the subject of the Library," he had no objection to the power granted the Librarian; he even believed that "the present architect who has built the great building ought, by concurrent resolution, to be named as the superintendent of the building, and the Librarian, Mr. Spofford, ought to be named by a concurrent resolution," but who, he asked, could "tell whom the President may select, whether these two most appropriate men or not; and the Senate will have only the right to object to that selection?" And he went on to declare that "by this bill, when enacted into law, Congress forever puts it out of their power to control the Library. It now loses its name and function of a Congressional Library, and becomes a national or Presidential Library, beyond the control of Congress, except by the President's consent."

President Cleveland affixed his approving signature on February 19. The text of the law read as follows:

#### LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

For Librarian of Congress, to be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, five thousand dollars; and the Librarian shall make rules and regulations for the government of the Library of Congress.

For the following, to be selected by the Librarian of Congress, by reason of special aptitude for the work of the Library, including the copyright work, namely: For chief assistant Librarian, four thousand dollars; assistant librarian (superintendent of reading room), three thousand dollars; assistant, one thousand eight hundred dollars; two

assistants, at one thousand five hundred dollars each; three assistants, at one thousand two hundred dollars each; six assistants, at nine hundred dollars each; ten attendants in collecting and distributing books, at seven hundred and twenty dollars each; two attendants in Representatives' reading room, one at nine hundred dollars and one at seven hundred and twenty dollars; attendant in Senators' reading room, nine hundred dollars; attendant in the Toner library, nine hundred dollars; attendant in the Washingtonian library, nine hundred dollars; two attendants in the cloakrooms, at seven hundred and twenty dollars each; attendant in the stamping room, seven hundred and twenty dollars; attendant in the packing room, seven hundred and twenty dollars; two watchmen, at seven hundred and twenty dollars each; chief of catalogue department, three thousand dollars; two assistants, at one thousand eight hundred dollars each; four assistants, at one thousand five hundred dollars each; four assistants, at one thousand two hundred dollars each; six assistants, at nine hundred dollars each; superintendent of art gallery, two thousand dollars; three assistants at nine hundred dollars each; superintendent of hall of maps and charts, two thousand dollars; two assistants, at nine hundred dollars each; superintendent of periodical department, one thousand five hundred dollars; three attendants and collators, at seven hundred and twenty dollars each; superintendent of manuscript department, one thousand five hundred dollars; two assistants, indexing, at seven hundred and twenty dollars each; superintendent of music department, one thousand five hundred dollars; assistant, nine hundred dollars; two assistants at seven hundred and twenty dollars each; superintendent of Congressional reference library at Capitol, one thousand five hundred dollars; two attendants, one at nine hundred dollars and one at seven hundred and twenty dollars; superintendent of law library, two thousand dollars; two assistants, at one thousand four hundred dollars each; and laborer, seven hundred and twenty dollars; in all, ninety-two thousand and twenty dollars.

COPYRIGHT DEPARTMENT: For the following under the direction of the Librarian of Congress, necessary for the execution of the copyright law, namely: Register of copyrights, three thousand dollars, who shall, on and after July first, eighteen hundred and ninety-seven, under the direction and supervision of the Librarian of Congress, perform all the duties relating to copyrights, and shall make weekly deposits with the Secretary of

the Treasury, and make monthly reports to the Secretary of the Treasury and to the Librarian of Congress, and shall, on and after July first, eighteen hundred and ninety-seven, give bond to the Librarian of Congress, in the sum of twenty thousand dollars, with approved sureties, for the faithful discharge of his duties; two clerks, at one thousand eight hundred dollars each; two clerks, at one thousand six hundred dollars each; three clerks, at one thousand four hundred dollars each; ten clerks, at one thousand two hundred dollars each; ten clerks, at nine hundred dollars each; two clerks, at seven hundred and twenty dollars each; in all, thirty-six thousand four hundred and forty dollars.

For purchase of books for the Library, four thousand dollars; for purchase of law books for the Library, under the direction of the Chief Justice, one thousand five hundred dollars; for purchase of new books of reference for the Supreme Court, to be a part of the Library of Congress and purchased by the marshal of the Supreme Court, under the direction of the Chief Justice, one thousand five hundred dollars; for expenses of exchanging public documents for the publications of foreign Governments, one thousand five hundred dollars; for purchase of files of periodicals, serials, and newspapers, two thousand five hundred dollars; in all, eleven thousand dollars.

For contingent expenses of the Library, five hundred dollars.

For expenses of the copyright business, five hundred dollars.

**CUSTODY, CARE, AND MAINTENANCE OF LIBRARY BUILDING AND GROUNDS:** For superintendent of the Library building and grounds, to be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, five thousand dollars; and said superintendent shall disburse all appropriations made for and on account of the Library and Library building and grounds, and shall on and after July first, eighteen hundred and ninety-seven, give bond, payable to the United States in the sum of thirty thousand dollars, with sureties approved by the Secretary of the Treasury, for the faithful discharge of his duties; and for the employment by said superintendent of all necessary clerks, messengers, watchmen, engineers, firemen, electrician, elevator conductors, mechanics, laborers, charwomen, and others for the proper custody, care, and maintenance of said building and grounds, forty-six thousand four hundred and forty dollars, and said superintendent shall report to Congress at its next regular session the number of employees and the compensation of each employed hereunder; in all, fifty-one thousand four hundred

and forty dollars: *Provided*, That all persons employed in and about said Library of Congress under the Librarian or the superintendent of the Library building and grounds shall be appointed solely with reference to their fitness for their particular duties.

For fuel, lights, repairs, and miscellaneous supplies, thirty-five thousand dollars, to be immediately available.

The officer now in charge of the construction of the building for the Library of Congress is hereby authorized and directed to terminate his present duty and assume the custody, care, and maintenance of the said building and grounds on and after March fourth, eighteen hundred and ninety-seven, appoint the employees under his charge, procure necessary furniture for the said building, and remove into it the library, including the copyright collections, furniture, and so forth, but excluding the law library, and superintend the completion of such contracts pertaining to the construction of said building as may remain unfinished on March fourth, eighteen hundred and ninety-seven, the total cost of such completion not to exceed the sums stated in said contracts. The said officer shall disburse the funds pertaining to the duties and operations hereby assigned to him, and shall receive compensation therefor in full at the rate per annum provided by the joint resolution approved April second, eighteen hundred and ninety-six, to be paid out of the appropriations for said Library building.

For furniture for Library reading rooms, halls, copyright offices, and so forth, a sum not exceeding fifty thousand dollars, and for expenses of removal of library and copyright collections to the Library building, a sum not exceeding six thousand dollars, are hereby respectively authorized to be expended by said officer, on and after the passage of this Act, out of any unexpended balance of the appropriations heretofore made for the completion of the building for the Library of Congress, and a sufficient amount of all further unexpended balance of said appropriations shall be available for the expenses, including personal services, of the custody and care of said Library building and grounds until July first, eighteen hundred and ninety-seven. The Librarian of Congress shall on and after July first, eighteen hundred and ninety-seven, give bond, payable to the United States, in the sum of twenty thousand dollars, with sureties approved by the Secretary of the Treasury, for the faithful discharge of his duties according to law.

The Librarian of Congress shall make to Congress at the beginning of each regular session, a



report for the preceding fiscal year, as to the affairs of the Library of Congress, including the copyright business, and said report shall also include a detailed statement of all receipts and expenditures on account of the Library and said copyright business.

The rooms and all space now occupied by the Library of Congress in the Capitol building shall not, after the removal of said Library, be occupied, either permanently or temporarily, for any purpose whatever until so ordered by Congress. (U. S. Stat. at Large, Vol. 29, page 544, et seq.)

### *His Own Office Boy*

The Joint Committee, as has been previously remarked, had not presented an alternative bill. Actually, its report, accompanied by a transcript of the hearings, was not submitted by the acting chairman, Henry Clay Hansbrough, of North Dakota, until the last day of the Fifty-fourth Congress, March 3, 1897. It contained this statement:

It is . . . provided in said House bill (No. 9643) that the Librarian of Congress shall have complete and entire control of the Library proper, including the copyright business; that he shall prescribe rules and regulations under which his assistants are to be employed and have the custody and management of the Library. Heretofore the Joint Committee on the Library has had authority to approve such rules and regulations as have been made by the Librarian of Congress, but the provision of law under which the joint committee has hitherto passed upon said rules and regulations would appear to be repealed by the more recent act which places this power in the hands of the Librarian of Congress.

Under these circumstances your Joint Committee on the Library did not deem it necessary to report a plan for the "organization, custody, and management" of the Library of Congress, in accordance with the provisions of the concurrent resolution under which this hearing was held.

And that was that. On the next day William McKinley was inaugurated.

There were no events of particular consequence until June 30, when the President sent a message to the Senate saying: "I nominate John Russell Young, of Pennsylvania, to be Librarian of Congress, as provided for by an act of Congress

approved February 19, 1897," whereupon George Peabody Wetmore, chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library, "to whom were this day referred" the nomination, reported favorably, and the Senate of the United States before going home for dinner had both advised and consented. The third phase of the Library's history had ended; the fourth was about to get under way.

John Russell Young, a Scot, born in County Tyrone, Ireland, was in his fifty-sixth year. His father, a weaver, had brought him to this country when he was less than a year old, and settled first in Downingtown and later in Philadelphia. There, he had begun his elementary education at the Harrison Grammar School, but he had graduated from a New Orleans High School, whither he had been sent, after the death of his mother, to live as the ward of an uncle. In 1851, he had returned to Philadelphia, and successively had found employment as a proofreader, copyboy, and journalist. It was said that he had been the first to report the facts of defeat and retreat from the Battle of Bull Run, a feat which won him a local reputation, and led to his appointment as managing editor of the *Philadelphia Press*. In 1862, he had been one of the founders of the Union League of Philadelphia. At the request of Jay Cooke, he had gone to New York to help with the publicity for a Federal loan, and while there he had written some articles for the *Tribune*, which so delighted Horace Greeley that he engaged him first as columnist and then, when he had reached the maturity of twenty-six, as managing editor. George S. Boutwell, Secretary of the Treasury, had sent him to Europe in 1870, and the following year, Hamilton Fish, then Secretary of State, had sent him abroad on a confidential mission. Thus he had been in Paris during the last days of the commune, a circumstance which had invoked

exciting stories from his brilliant pen. In 1872 he had become associated with the *New York Herald* as an editorial writer. When Grant had taken his swing about the globe in 1877, he had invited Mr. Young to accompany him, and the result had been a two-volume history of the expedition, *Around the World with General Grant*. From this trip had developed Mr. Young's interest in the Far East. He had established a warm friendship with the great Chinese statesman, Li Hung Chang, and he had so impressed General Grant that he had persuaded President Arthur to appoint Young, Minister to China in 1882. In that post he had distinguished himself as a diplomat. When, in 1885, he had resumed his editorial work for the *Herald*, he divided his time between Paris and London. He had returned to Philadelphia in 1890.

He knew everybody: statesmen, cardinals, poets, actors, duchesses, people great and people now called "little." In appearance he was "rather short and stout," but his head was fine—the "perfect example of the head of an intellectual man." Frederick MacMonnies who had carved so much of the statuary for the "new" Library, once made an excellent bust of Mr. Young. He was quiet. He made friends without effort and retained them just as easily. Alexander K. McClure said of him that "no man in the list of our illustrious editors has reared a grander monument to the progress of American journalism."

Mr. Young's unfinished and unpublished biography, now in the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress, breaks off with a memorandum of further details of his life to be included:

His Private Conferences with Mr. McKinley up to the time of his death in the capacity of friend and adviser—That his taking of the Congressional Library was a part of the plan of campaign during the War, to be of service to McKinley in various

ways, his adviser and private diplomat, as Mr. Young had strong Spanish and European connections, and means of obtaining special information and "points" regarding the situation.

John Russell Young took the oath as the seventh Librarian of Congress before James H. McKenney, Clerk of the Supreme Court of the United States, on the morning of July 1, 1897, and, according to the *New York Tribune's* reporter, "his first act was the appointment of A. R. Spofford as first assistant librarian, with whom he consulted on the work of his new office."

For Mr. Spofford the change meant release from intolerable burdens. He was a bookman, not a bureaucrat, and no one was more sure of it than he. Indeed, it is just possible that the plan for the reorganization of the Library had provided the post of Chief Assistant Librarian in order that he might have a place of dignity and prestige where his great genius (and it was very great) might exercise its full powers. He was not at his best as an administrator. *The Library Journal* in January had said of him: "Nor has he benefited as was to be hoped, from recent experience . . . copyright checks are still unbanked and used, without proper safeguards, to pay off the minor bills of the Library."

He took the "stepping down" with the grace that was his nature, but certainly it was an act of gallantry almost unparalleled in the long and sometimes unlovely chronicle of public service. Another Librarian of Congress, for some years his admiring and admired associate, was one day to say this of the experience:

To give over to another the accustomed reins of authority is at no time easy; to give them over at the moment when the institution is emerging from a pinched and narrow to a spacious and glorious life; from the life which has been a struggle to the opportunities for which one has struggled; to give them over then, and with them the prestige and the privilege of the office; such a surrender is hard indeed. The man who, like Dr. Spofford, can



make it without a murmur, before or after, is of incredible rarity. The man of his years who, having for two generations been chief executive, cannot merely subordinate, but endear himself to his successor, and never waiver in fidelity to the institution nor in enthusiasm for its interests—such a man has achieved a feat beside which mere feats of memory are of trivial moment.

With him, however, this was not a feat, but nature; the ordinary expression of a nature absolutely loyal, consistently unselfish.

Herbert Putnam, who spoke these words, has given lasting meaning to Mr. Spofford's inexhaustible spirit. And yet it detracts nothing from the tribute to recall reasons why Mr. Spofford may, on that occasion, have felt inexpressible relief. He would now be free to do the things he best could do, which were the things he loved the best. There was no pomposity about him; he was no servant of his own power, no slave of his ambitions. These were traits where he was always master. And ahead lay no Mosaic disappointment. He was going into the "new land," not at the head, perhaps, but a passionate part of the great procession.

*Chutes, Whip Tackle, Handbarrows  
and the Crossing*

The "New Library" was completed when Mr. Young assumed the duties of Librarian but because Congress was in session, and remained in session until July 24, no immediate action could be taken to transfer the collections. As a consequence, Mr. Young laid his plans, interviewed his visitors and generally conducted the Library's affairs, either in his "rooms on New Jersey Avenue," or in the resplendent office which he had had furnished in the otherwise empty edifice.

In charge of the Building was the Superintendent, Bernard R. Green, formerly one of the several architects, who had been closely associated with every detail of its construction. The lines of authority, between Mr. Young and Mr. Green, were

tightly drawn and carefully defined. Thus Mr. Young had charge of, and jurisdiction over, all rooms and spaces "occupied by the business and special departments and collections pertaining to the Library proper, as well as the collections themselves, and including the main and special reading rooms, exhibition halls, and executive offices," while Mr. Green presided over "all other parts of the building, approaches, and grounds, including the cellar, entrances, public halls, corridors, lavatories, machinery and apparatus of every kind, the repair of furniture," and what was more, he had "the right of access to all rooms and spaces throughout the building for purposes of repairs, attention to the heating, ventilating, and electrical apparatus, etc." As early as March, the "nearly vacant" building had been opened to visitors, who "came by thousands daily" to gape and marvel and swell with pride in this magnificence which Congress had provided for the public. The grounds had "been handsomely lighted . . . by means of the electric plant," and "the extensive apparatus and machinery" had been "in excellent running order continually." Indeed, the monumental structure was a nine day's wonder; one outspoken enthusiast wrote to Mr. Young: "Not till I stand before the judgment seat of God do I expect ever to see it transcended."

Over in the Capitol, Mr. Spofford conducted the day-to-day services of the Library, trained the rapidly increasing staff in the requirements of their positions, and consulted with his superior by mail. There was great activity.

When Congress at last adjourned it became possible for the Library to occupy its new quarters. Some material had already been removed. As early as October 1895, long before the completion of the building, seventy tons of unclassified copyright deposits had been transferred

from "a temporary compartment in the southeast quarter of the crypt of the Capitol," to the "south curtain room" in the "New Library's" basement story; between April 10 and April 14, 1897, the Toner Collection had been installed; and between June 7 and June 21, a large portion of the Smithsonian books had been shifted. But now, as the removal began in earnest, it was discovered that the holdings of the Library were scattered everywhere throughout the Capitol. In addition to the three, formally constituted, "iron rooms," and the four "spacious storerooms for the Library . . . made in the four quarters of the crypt" fifteen years before, there were eighteen separate apartments which contained parts of the Library of Congress.

For example, the Librarian's office, on the main floor, south of the corridor at the principal entrance to the Library in which there was a "moderate quantity of furniture," was "piled up with an almost inaccessible mass of rare books, pamphlets, letters and other papers." The spacious attic room, extending the full length of the central Library hall, was filled to overflowing with bound newspapers and periodicals and "provided cramped accommodations for the book-binder who worked there." The irregular recesses in the mezzanine story of the "Old Guard Room," located in the basement immediately under the east end of the north hall of the Library, was "solidly packed with copyright deposits, principally books;" as was also a small circular stairwell in the northwest corner of the crypt. The "Hole in the Wall," a small circular space at the southeast corner of the Library was jammed with "District copyright court records, early copyright titles, and unbound periodicals."

A sub-basement, annular-shaped "dungeon under the great rotunda," with a "long oblique wing to the westward, and

a number of recesses and angles," was crowded with "bound newspapers and documents, maps and charts, and a portion of the law library." The room in which were placed the Capitol gas meters, in the sub-basement, held copyright deposits and unbound periodicals and documents. The "Old Paint Room," a spacious apartment in the sub-basement on the south side of the corridor, contained "a large mass of documents more or less injured by dampness." Boxes of books were stacked in a room in the western terrace, in the eastern passageway of the crypt and even in "the adjacent porte cochère." All, or nearly all of these spaces "were difficult of access and practically devoid of daylight and ventilation." Mr. Green reported that "miserable oil lamps and rickety disordered gas fixtures were depended on for illumination, and it is remarkable that none of the contents were ever destroyed or even damaged by fire."

On July 31, the "Old Library" was closed except for copyright business, all leaves of absence were canceled and the work got under way. Handbarrows and open trays of cheap smooth pine had been constructed, and were so designed as each to hold a shelf of books. These were loaded and handled by laborers who usually hoisted them to their shoulders and carried them along the floors or upstairs, but the more heavily laden boxes required two men, one at each end. Where considerable descents were involved, as from the Library galleries or at the front steps of the Capitol, chutes were used, down which the cases were carefully lowered. Thence they were piled into one-horse express wagons, of which "not more than three, and frequently but two, were employed at \$2.50 each per day with a driver," and were transported to the west entrance, under the porte cochère, of the Library where they were unloaded and where other workmen carried the



handbarrows along that floor, "either to the basement rooms, in which much of the unclassified matter was temporarily deposited and stacked, or to the elevators in the several bookstacks." The elevators lifted them to their assigned decks where they were "again carried by hand and distributed to the shelving." The empty boxes were returned to the Capitol for reloading by the same route and the same method of handling was employed except that whereas chutes were used for descent, now in the eastward crossing, "they were hoisted by hand with a single whip tackle."

Throughout the entire operation the greatest care was taken to preserve the exact arrangement of the collections. The procedure followed consisted of a system of shelf-cards of different colors, about five by seven inches in size, the colors identifying the destined bookstacks, and each bearing four penciled numbers designating the tier, range, bay and shelf respectively. The simple plan of the stacks "made such a system of marking so apparent and natural that no time was required to learn it." It was said that "even the common laborers quickly comprehended it, and no mistakes occurred in carrying it out."

The books got a thorough cleaning. Before loading them into boxes they were "brushed and beaten to free them from dust," and when they reached the new building "the remaining dust was blown out with compressed air applied through the lawn and fire hose leading from the air compressor of the pneumatic tube system belonging to the building." For the purpose a "special nozzle was used having a slit outlet 4 inches long."

Day after day the work went on. The collections were never out of the sight of watchmen from the moment they emerged from the "Old Library" until they were placed within the New. One watchman was stationed in the Capitol rotunda, one

at the foot of the portico steps, one half way to the new building, one at its west entrance, and one or two more inside. On wagons carrying especially valuable material a watchman accompanied the driver. There were no thefts and there were no losses. Last to be moved were the rarities from the Librarian's old office which required special precautions. The job was substantially completed by November 20, 1897. The "eleven hair trunks and a case for maps" had come to weigh 800 tons. For labor, the hire of wagons, the boxes, handbarrows, chutes, other carpentry, labels, cards, paper and twine had cost \$5,104.10, well under the appropriation which Congress had made to cover the expense. Mr. Green might feel a sensation of contentment.

### *By Reason of Special Aptitude*

For Mr. Young the first task was the recruitment of a staff to effect the reorganization which Congress had contemplated in the appropriation. The library profession had not thought well of his appointment, considering it "a matter of regret and discouragement to all interested in the development of what is in fact, if not in name, the national library" remarking that his chief qualification for the office seemed to "lie in political preferment," and foreseeing that the Library would be "conducted on the principle of 'patronage' not of fitness." Of course any such assumption was ridiculous since it would assume the willingness of Mr. Young deliberately to break the law. But if the profession, as organized, and if its views as collectively expressed, looked askance at the interloping amateur, he was not long without personal assurances of approval and cooperation. A fortnight after Mr. Young had taken office, Melvil Dewey, director of the New York State Library had sent him a message:

I send this note back by the pilot boat as I sail

for the International congress of librarians, because I am very anxious to have you know at the earliest hour my attitude toward the great work to which you have been called. Many librarians have expressed themselves strongly against any appointment except of an experienced technical librarian. I have said from the first that I could easily conceive of a strong administrative man being put at the head, who might be better for the country than any of the professional librarians. I profoundly hope that you are the man needed for the wonderful work that is possible. May I ask you to glance over my testimony before the joint committee last December, for what I believe the true ideal for the library that ought to lead all the world.

I send you this note to pledge you my warm support, not only personally and as director of the New York State Library, but as secretary and executive officer of the American Library Association, and also as president of the library department of the National Education Association. I shall do all in my power to secure for you the hearty sympathy, confidence, and so far as you may wish it, cooperation of the American librarians.

I hope you will authorize me to enroll your name at once as a member of the American Library Association. May I venture to suggest that it would gratify the international conference of librarians very much if you would cable me at London a cordial word indicating your wish to be a member and to share in the important work of our association.

My life has been given to this library development. You can understand how deeply I am interested in having the whole body of librarians in cordial sympathy with the national library. I am sure that a cable from you, followed by a letter which would reach me before we separate, if sent at once, would do much good.

This was encouragement indeed, and it came from one of the most remarkable and powerful influences in the professional world. It was not long before *The Library Journal* was saying that "nothing can do more to justify the selection of Mr. Young than the admirable appointments he has made for the leading positions."

As reorganized the Library was to consist of a reading room, an art gallery, a hall of maps and charts, a periodical department, a manuscript department, a

music department, and the Law Library, each with a superintendent at its head; a catalogue department under the direction of a chief, and the copyright department presided over by a register. Exclusive of custodial and maintenance personnel, the staff had been increased from 42 to 108. Early in July, John R. Procter, as its president, had informed Mr. Young that the Civil Service Commission would be "pleased at any time to cooperate with you in testing the fitness of persons for appointment on the force of the Library under your charge," but the act of February 19, 1897, had made it the duty of the Librarian to determine the qualifications of candidates for positions. Accordingly, on August 2, he appointed a Board, consisting of the Chief Assistant Librarian, the Superintendent of the Reading Room and the Register of Copyrights to examine applicants for positions. These were the Board's instructions:

This inquiry will embrace fitness for Library service; education, intellectual capacity; experience; manners; and personal habits and standing. The examination will not be severe nor technical. We cannot hope to have a staff of completely trained assistants in the junior branches of the service—such offices as pay \$720 a year. In these minor offices there should be an elementary knowledge or training which could be perfected in our own Library. The members of the Board will therefore use discriminating judgment, and noting the capacity which needs only experience and development, give the candidate an opportunity. In the higher branches of the service evidence of higher training should be expected.

All proceedings before the Board—the scope of inquiry and the names of the candidates—should be confidential. A written report in each case will be submitted by each member of the Board to the Librarian.

Mr. Young made it generally and publicly clear that it was not his intention to create sinecures. Actually, for many months the preponderance of the Librarian's correspondence was concerned with



personnel matters. To Senator William E. Mason, of Illinois, he wrote:

I have had thousands of applications for the few places at my disposal and have made the nominations upon certain rules, First, fitness for the work—and in most respects, this is as technical as the Medical or Engineer service. Then I have thought of geographical considerations—remembering that we have a *national* institution and that all sections should be represented.

In much the same vein he wrote to Senator Cushman K. Davis, of Minnesota:

There are several applicants from the East [for the post of Superintendent of Manuscripts] especially from Boston; but I have an idea that the Library, being national, should represent all sections so far as conducive to the public interest.

He was, of course, importuned to make places for the deserving but mentally underprivileged, for girls whose requests for consideration were based solely on "a love for books and reading," and for hangers-on of all sizes, shapes and sorts, but with astonishing urbanity he managed to calm outraged "sponsors," and disgruntled but influential claimants, by reciting the requirements imposed on him by law, and by recalling Mr. Lincoln's difficulties in putting a thousand pegs in a hundred holes. But the publicity which attached to the Library's new grandeur, not only as it came from the press, but from popular magazines such as *Harper's Weekly*, *The Century*, *The Nation*, *The Critic*, *The Scientific American*, *The Review of Reviews*, *Scribner's*, *Munsey's*, *The Outlook*, and *The Forum*, seemed to induce in every man, woman and child a sudden realization of unrecognized talent for librarianship.

A gentleman at Hot Springs, South Dakota, wrote to Mr. Young:

I am here to escape hay fever . . .

I trust in the great multiplicity of duties and things, you have not overlooked my young friend. I am in receipt of a letter from Philadelphia and it expresses much anxiety over the appointment. I have replied I have faith in the eventual success, that she is only an atom, but though so insig-

nificant still will be remembered this cooler month—I trust I am right.

Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, writing from Dobb's Ferry used a more direct approach:

This will be handed you by Mary E. Thomas who wants to help keep the Library building clean.

She is a sister of my cook, and my cook is a good cook and so, at her request I take an interest in her sister—Give her a chance if you can and I shall feel thankful.

Although they preempted most of the space in the letter books it was not these "minor offices" which loomed largest in the Librarian's mind. It was, on the contrary, important first to fill the principal positions in order that the great work might receive the immediate direction it required. Mr. Spofford, of course, had been installed at once as Chief Assistant Librarian. For Superintendent of the Reading Room, who alone among the superintendents of departments bore by law the additional title of Assistant Librarian, Mr. Young, on July 12, selected the Scot-born, David Hutcheson, now about forty-five, but already a veteran of twenty-three years of service. Of his appointment *The Library Journal*, which so recently had taken a skeptical view of the Library of Congress, said this:

The appointment is non-political, and strictly along the line of direct merit and civil service reform. Mr. Hutcheson in his connection with the Library has shown executive capacity, courtesy, and tact, and he is especially fitted for the post assigned him. The appointment has been received with general cordial approval.

He would continue in that position for another decade, and there would be universal regret when he would offer and insist upon the acceptance of his resignation, giving as his reason: "advancing age, fatigue of long service and premonition of ill health." An excellent librarian but a wretched prognosticator, he would live until May 27, 1933.

The insistencies of the Copyright Office impelled attention and on July 22, the position of Register went to Thorvald Solberg, who had had a part in the work since 1876. Said the *Journal*: "There can be but one opinion as to the choice for the new office of Register of Copyrights of the one man, Mr. Solberg, best fitted for this post by his specific knowledge of copyright bibliography, by his previous experience in one division of the National Library, and by his earnest desire to do everything that he does in the best way in which it can be done." Mr. Solberg was to continue to hold that office until his retirement on his seventy-eighth birthday, April 22, 1930, an interval marked by the filing of 4,116,560 registrations and the collection of \$3,988,119.20 in fees which were covered into the Treasury.

For the superintendence of the Art Gallery, Mr. Young on July 12, picked Thomas G. Alvord, Jr., son of a former member of the New York legislature. Mr. Alvord had been, for some years, the Washington correspondent of the New York *World*, and only recently had returned from a trip to Cuba, which was figuring conspicuously in the news. He was a man of "enthusiasm, interest, loyalty and unfailing good humor." He would soon begin to double in brass as the Library's Chief Clerk, a position which he would hold until 1905, when he would resume his journalistic career "under very attractive conditions."

It seems possible that Mr. Young considered James B. Harmer for the post of Superintendent of the Hall of Maps and Charts, but he soon changed his mind and gave the place to Philip Lee Phillips, who for many years, when not absorbed by general cataloging, had been in charge of the Library's cartographic collection. It was said at the time that it was "largely due to him that the maps and charts in the library have been cataloged and made at

all available for public use, and he has been called the creator of this department of the library." He would hold that position until his death on January 4, 1924, after forty-eight years of service. The year before, in 1923, the Librarian of Congress would say of him: "His aid, not merely to individuals, but to governments (including our own) engaged in boundary disputes has been incessant, notable, and often decisive. His reputation and service have gained him a Fellowship in the Royal Geographic Society, and the Order of Bolivar, of Venezuela." And when he died, Mr. Putnam would write:

It was then he who, almost solely by his own hand (for he had never a staff sufficiently expert to relieve him), compiled the analytical lists which, as publications of the Library, were substantial contributions to knowledge, in some cases unique, and became esteemed abroad as well as at home as among the most useful tools for the cartographer. Entire absorption in his collection—its development and interpretation—had brought him to a precision of knowledge regarding its contents which constituted him a recognized authority, without recourse to whom conclusions in American cartography would be unsafe; the authority to whom, for example, our own Government necessarily had recourse on cartographic issues with foreign powers.

Allen B. Slauson, a graduate of Cornell, and for many years a Washington correspondent for several Oregon papers, was selected, on September 1, to head the Periodical Department. Walter R. Whitteley, "for several years chief operator for the Southern Railway in Alexandria, Virginia, was on September 1 appointed superintendent of the Music Department," and was said to be "a practised musician."

Herbert Friedenwald became Superintendent of the Manuscript Department on September 14. A native of Baltimore, he had recently made his home in Philadelphia. He was a graduate of Johns Hopkins University, where he had received the A. B. degree in 1890, and, following a year of travel and investigation in Europe,



he had entered the postgraduate department of the University of Pennsylvania, in order to pursue studies in history, more particularly American history, under John Bach McMaster. In 1894 he had been awarded the degree of Ph. D. from that institution. In connection with his work toward that degree he had devoted seven months in 1892-93 to making researches among the records of the Continental Congress then deposited in the Department of State. Thereafter he had continued his examination of various manuscript records in the Historical Society, Philadelphia, and had earnestly advocated the publication by the Government of its Revolutionary archives. At a recent conference of the American Library Association, he had presented a valuable paper on *The Care of Manuscripts*, and had made many important contributions to the American Jewish Historical Society. He would remain in charge of the Library's manuscripts until September 1, 1900, and would have a distinguished career as writer, historian and librarian.

Thomas H. Clark, of Montgomery, Alabama, was chosen as Superintendent of the Law Library, which was considered "virtually a department." He was a lawyer and a newspaper man, who had taken a great interest in the history of his State. In 1893, he had delivered an address on *Historical Alabama* before the literary societies of the Alabama Polytechnic Institute, in which he had manifested a sound appreciation of the role of libraries as preservers of historical source material. This had won him the accolade of the American Library Association which declared that he had "shown the true library spirit." Naturally, Mr. Young had consulted the Chief Justice of the United States about this appointment, and on August 30, Melville W. Fuller had written the Librarian:

I do not feel, in the absence of a personal interview, that I can be of any particular assistance in the way of suggestion as to the Superintendent of the Law Library, and entertain no doubt that your selection in that regard will be satisfactory. Perhaps I ought to add that my impressions of Mr. Clark are very favorable. The Law Library is worthy of attention on every ground, and this it will receive under the direct supervision of an intelligent and conscientious head.

On my return to Washington I shall be glad to go over the general subject with you but the appointment need not be delayed on that account.

Mr. Clark would hold the post until October 1903, when he would resign in order to return to the practice of law.

Mr. Young offered to appoint Alexander J. Rudolph, assistant librarian of the Newberry Library, Chicago, to the direction of the Catalogue Department, and was deeply affronted by the churlish response, written on August 3:

I am sorry to say that I cannot accept your kind offer for the following reasons; viz:

1. The position of Superintendent [i. e. Chief] of the Catalogue Department of the Library of Congress, as outlined, is subordinate to the present *Assistant Librarian*, who would receive all the credit of my work.

2. To teach an untrained force, not engaged under the Civil Service, is a hard and difficult work. You will admit that it takes great skill in organizing, and tact in managing employees in large numbers who hold their positions more or less through influence.

3. In order to succeed in raising the Library of Congress to *The Reference Library* of this country I must give my full mind, heart and soul to the work. The regular office hours would not be sufficient; all my time would be required; in other words I would have to give up all my private work.

4. I am engaged at present in The Newberry Library on an important work, which will go to press about December.

Taking all these points under consideration you will agree with me, that a salary of \$3,000 per year would not compensate me for my work.

I thank you very much for your well-meaning proposition.

Instead, Mr. Young did infinitely better, for he secured on September 1, the acceptance of James Christian Hanson,





*The Main Reading Room of the Library of Congress today, as seen from the visitors' gallery. Collections of reference books are located in the alcoves which surround the room.*





then head cataloger of the University of Wisconsin Library. A graduate of Cornell, and a fine linguist, Mr. Hanson had served for a time in the Newberry Library which the impudent Rudolph was so reluctant to leave. Mr. Hanson was to become one of the towering figures in the profession. And a few months later Mr. Young received a letter from a young Swiss, who was another member of the Newberry staff:

I am in receipt of my appointment as assistant to the Superintendent of the Catalogue Department, Library of Congress. Please accept my thanks therefor. I shall promptly report for duty to Mr. Hanson as directed by you.

It was signed, Charles Martel.

As a principal assistant in the Reading Room, Mr. Young appointed Appleton P. C. Griffin, one of the most experienced and most proficient technicians in the country, who for some years had been connected with the Boston Public Library, and who, after 1894, had undertaken special cataloging for the Boston Athenaeum and independent bibliographical labors for the American Historical Association. He was said to be a wonder, and he was.

Finally, Arthur R. Kimball, then state librarian of New Hampshire, where he had made an excellent record, was placed on the rolls to supervise the Library's order work.

Men like these could give the lie to all the aspersions of the Rudolphs, and quickly quelled the premature perturbations of the professionals. Everyone was pleased. *The Library Journal* ate its words, and announced that "the new librarian of Congress continues to give the best of evidence of his intention to make the library worthy of its opportunities, by appointing skilled and fit men in the leading positions." It was a good team. It was a good start.

### *Library Now Ready*

It was Monday, November 1, 1897. The Commissioner of Internal Revenue released an annual report which announced a falling off in receipts; Theodore Roosevelt returned to Washington from Columbus where he had delivered an address in support of Senator Hanna, and when asked by a reporter how he found the political situation in Ohio, Assistant Secretary Roosevelt replied "the fight is very, very hard, owing mainly to the fact that it was difficult to wake up the republicans;" the post office, at Smithfield, Virginia, was robbed of four hundred dollars; the body of Henry George, suddenly careless of progress and poverty, was laid to rest in Greenwood cemetery near the grave of Henry Ward Beecher; Russia, and Japan and the United States were said to be ready to sign a treaty for the suspension of pelagic sealing; and the front page of the *Evening Star* carried a long story, under the headline: "Library Now Ready."

It was raining. Mr. Young, still weary from his inspection of the day before, when, accompanied by Mr. Spofford, Mr. Hutcheson and Mr. Green, he had gone over the building from top to bottom; arose early, and hurried to the Library. As he climbed the outside steps to the west main entrance, he passed little groups of excited people, huddled beneath umbrellas. Whittlesey and Alvord would not be ready. For them there had not been a lapse of time sufficient to permit the unpacking, assortment, and arrangement of the thousands of sheets of music and prints which had been stored and packed away as received, without even so much as an inventory listing. But everywhere else there was the outward seeming of order. The guards, in their new blue uniforms, were at their stations. An ancient Negro, seated at a desk beside the great doors,



nearly ten feet tall, that gave admittance to the Reading Room, with exquisite dignity pulled a lever and the portal swung inward at Mr. Young's approach. Mr. Young disregarded the blunt injunction of the sign: "Keep Quiet," and said "Good morning."

Inside the central reference desk, the two Morrisons, Hugh and John, and Willard Moore wore an expectant look. They patted the polished brass of the pneumatic tubes by which they communicated calls to the collections, and left finger marks which were removed hurriedly when they saw the Librarian of Congress advancing toward them. Behind them the baskets of the carrier swung past on their endless chain. They assured Mr. Young that it was in perfect working order. The alcoves were filled with reference books. From the dome, the face of Ellen Terry, with her allegorical companions looked down from Edward Blashfield's concept of Human Understanding. Because of the outside darkness, the "star-lights" burned in the gallery. The tiny card catalog was tucked away inside the great desk, and in the stacks, which rose to the north and east and south, that one-third of the collection which was classified awaited usefulness.

Mr. Young looked up at Mr. Flanagan's clock, where Time was immobilized, one foot lifted as if in forward stride. The jewelled hands, with their semiprecious stones, recorded nine o'clock. The public streamed into the great octagon. The new Library was open for business.

Among them were faces familiar to those who formerly had frequented the Capitol's iron room. Said the *Evening Star's* reporter:

There was the old gentleman with the long white whiskers who read his favorite volume through gold-bowed glasses. Another was the fair, young girl, tailor-made, with a taste for light literature and caramels sandwiched. The schol-

arly looking man with the high forehead and long black hair, with other characteristics which marked him as the theological student, was in evidence. These were three types, but there were all the others.

There is in this extract for us of later days a strong bond with the past:

The first volume asked for about three minutes after the door was opened was "Roger Williams' Year Book," of so recent a date that it had not been received.

And in this:

The first book applied for and given out was "Martha Lamb's History of New York City," and the gentleman who had the honor of receiving the initial volume submitted to the great American public, or one representative, bore the name of Max West.

Now, a modern reference librarian could supply the *Star's* reporter with more precise information about Dr. West; how he had been born at St. Cloud, Minnesota, just twenty-seven years before, how he had been educated at the State University, and in 1891 had gone east to Columbia to take an A. M. and a Ph. D., and to be made a Fellow in Finance; how his dissertation had been entitled *The Inheritance Tax* and had run through three editions; how he had been a docent in economics at the University of Chicago and had married; how he had been a reporter on the *Chicago Herald* and had lived at Hull House and had covered the railroad strike; how he was, on that morning of November 1, 1897, employed by the Department of Agriculture at the princely compensation of \$1,400 a year. For Dr. West is important not just for himself, nor even for his outstanding scholarship, but because he has been followed into that vast reading room by more than 10,000,000 of his fellows, and because more than 23,000,000 volumes have been responsive to their quest.

There was, on that opening day, a solitary mishap which occurred when the fingers of the carrier became caught, or

interlocked, in those of a shelf on one of the decks, and were badly bent. But even this "was remedied in a few minutes and everything went on in excellent shape."

In the Periodical Department, a gentleman asked for all the references to lynch law registered in Mr. Poole's *Index*, and got them. The Library was beginning to render the services for which it existed and for which it had been built.

### *A Short Essay on Shakespearean Indifference*

It will be remembered that the American Library Association had taken the stand that the name of the Library should be changed from the Library of Congress to the National Library. Both within and without the profession the proposal gained warm and, sometimes, fanatic supporters, with the result that when, on December 6, 1897, the second session of the Fifty-fifth Congress commenced its deliberations, the Honorable Alexander Monroe Dockery, a Representative from Missouri, who a year before had wrung "loud applause" and "renewed applause" from his colleagues by an eloquent insistence on the "misnomer," introduced H. R. 4075 to correct it. The bill consisted of three paragraphs; the first provided that the "Library of Congress shall be known as and styled the 'national Library,'" the second that "the Librarian of Congress shall hereafter be known and designated as the 'Director of the National Library';" and the third provided that "all citizens of the United States over the age of twelve years, residing permanently or temporarily in the District of Columbia . . . shall be entitled to withdraw books from the national library." The bill was referred to the Committee on the Library.

That was the same day on which William McKinley had presented his annual message to Congress, and that document had contained these lines:

The Library building provided for by the act of Congress approved April 15, 1886, has been completed and opened to the public. It should be a matter of congratulation that through the foresight and munificence of Congress the nation possesses this noble treasure-house of knowledge. It is earnestly to be hoped that, having done so much toward the cause of education, Congress will continue to develop the Library in every phase of research, to the end that it may be not only one of the most magnificent, but among the richest and most useful libraries in the world.

That was it. The building was itself the expression of the Library's national character. It had a special reading room for Representatives, and another reading room for Senators; Congress would then and always have first claim upon its resources; but the remainder of the building, aside from the administrative offices and the spaces devoted to the technical processes had been constructed especially for the service of the general public. The edifice was the unargued and unarguable recognition of the national responsibility.

And so Congressman Dockery's bill was reported out by the chairman of the Library Committee, the Honorable Lemuel Ely Quigg, of New York, on December 13. The report was brief: it contained little more than the "recommendation that the last paragraph be stricken out, and that as so amended it do pass." The committee, in other words, had no objection to, but, on the contrary, approved, the alteration in the "style." The bill was placed upon the calendar, and for some reason unknown was thereafter lost from sight.

There were, however, those who continued to seek action on it. Melvil Dewey, in a letter to Mr. Young, dated February 26, 1898, offered his services: "I write tonight to ask what if anything we can do to help you. We all feel intensely that your name should be changed to National Library." The Librarian's reply has not been seen, but it is not improbable that he



shared with Congress a Shakespearean indifference to the power of nomenclature. In 1933, the chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library, the Honorable Simeon D. Fess of Ohio, would put it this way:

It is really the Library of Congress but is generally regarded as a national library in view of the fact that it serves more than the Members of Congress. However, it is specifically designated as the "Library of Congress," and I presume it will always so remain . . . No wonder the librarians of the country look to our Library as a source of power, stand solidly in support of it, and are restive at mention of it as the Library of Congress and not, as they think it, the National Library of the United States. They are quite at liberty to think of it so even though we hold to its ancient title.

The administrators of the Library rejoice in the "ancient title," for as the Library of the representatives of the people, and through those representatives, as the Library of the people themselves, it has no lesser loyalties to separate it from the national interest; no policy to serve except a national policy. It is relieved of the stress of partisanship and special doctrine.

And there the matter rests.

### *In the Interest of the National Library*

From the first days of his incumbency. Mr. Young realized his responsibility for the development of the collections, and devoted hours of his time to the preparation of statements of a satisfactory acquisitions policy. He understood at once that unless the materials in his charge were comprehensive and complete, neither a fine new building nor an expertly trained staff could contrive the national resource which the Congress and the people had so perfect a right to require of him. Thus, for example, he wrote to his old friend William Winter, of the New York *Tribune*, on October 22, 1897:

In arranging our Periodical Department for preservation in the National Library, I find no

trace of the old Saturday Press, the paper to which Jefferson referred in his noted Lotos Club speech. It was, as you know, a brilliant and unique type of journalism and I am anxious to have it on file and its existence perpetuated in the National Library.

He concluded with an appeal for help in locating an unbroken run.

But the document most revealing of his concept of materials appropriate to the contents of the Library, was a circular letter, obviously the product of many days of labor, which he completed on February 16, 1898. It was designed and printed for distribution among the officers of the foreign service of the United States. On March 11, he wrote to the Honorable William R. Day, Assistant Secretary of State: "You are very good about the circular to our foreign representatives in regard to the Library. I am sure that it will be a public service. I send you 500 circulars as requested." This was their text:

SIR:

The Library of Congress has been removed from the Capitol to the new Library Building. The books, pamphlets, serials, manuscripts and other collections are now in process of arrangement.

Its original classification by Thomas Jefferson contemplated a national Library, universal and representative in character, with all knowledge for its province. The policy of Mr. Jefferson has been followed until what under his inception was a collection of less than 8,000 volumes, has become nearly 800,000, and ranks among the great libraries of the world.

The new Library has space for four and a half million books. The increase from 1861 to the present day has been more than tenfold—that is to say from 75,000 to 800,000 in one generation alone. There is no sign of a diminishing ratio, and it is believed that it could be increased through the advice and co-operation of gentlemen in our foreign service. Public documents, newspapers, serials, pamphlets, manuscripts, broadsides, chap-books, ballads, records of original research, publications illustrative of the manners, customs, resources and traditions of communities to which our foreign representatives are accredited, the proceedings of learned, scientific or religious bodies, the reports of corporations such as railways, canals, or industrial companies,

legislative records and debates, public decrees, church registers, genealogy, family and local histories, chronicles of county and parish life, folk-lore, fashions, domestic annals, documents illustrative of the history of those various nationalities now coming to our shores, to blend into our national life, and which as a part of our library archives would be inestimable to their descendants—whatever, in a word, would add to the sum of human knowledge, would be gratefully received and have due and permanent acknowledgement.

Opportunities for securing the original or a copy of useful manuscripts or rare editions would be welcome. Those and the other publications suggested might be brought to our attention with the view of purchase from the Library funds, or securing by exchange, buying what may have a special value, or exchanging from our collection of duplicates. In the process of selection or inquiry, nothing should be deemed trivial, remembering that what in its day was an apparently worthless publication, of the time of the English Commonwealth, the American Revolution, or our recent Civil War, may hereafter be priceless in its value.

This is written in the interest of the National Library, and with the belief that the suggestion alone is necessary to secure your co-operation in the development of one of the most important branches of our public service.

But universal as his objectives seemed, there was one classification of literature which he excepted, for on the same day, on which he completed this statement, he declined an offer from a correspondent in Bronxville, saying "this Library does not purchase early medical books." A few weeks later he reaffirmed this principle in a letter to W. Golden Mortimer, of New York City: "This Library has ceased to purchase medical books for nearly twenty years past—while the library of the Surgeon General's Office has built up the largest collection on that and allied subjects in the country." Otherwise, the books of the world were his province.

The circular had an almost immediate effect. The assistance of the Department of State to the Library of Congress is not only traditional but historical as well.

Now it was writing a new chapter in the record of helpfulness. Material streamed from every spot in the globe. From Ethan A. Hitchcock, Ambassador to Russia from the United States of America, came word that he had asked John Sherman, formerly chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library, now Secretary of State, to make "Mr. Young understand that the interests of the National Library will have my hearty cooperation." He asked for additional copies of the circular, and gave assurance of his pleasure in endeavoring "to make arrangements with the Imperial Library for the exchange of duplicates." And he ventured: "There is doubtless very much that is desirable here for purchase, but the only suggestion I am able to make is that the Librarian should employ, monthly, a small sum of money for the payment of an agent here to search for such matter as might seem valuable and report upon it, making such purchases for the Library as might be authorized." As it happened there was "here just now a young Amercian of good intelligence, a graduate with honors, of Cornell, who speaks and reads French, German and Russian and whose means being limited," would probably "be glad to engage in this work."

Mr. Young replied, on April 26, enclosing the additional copies of the circular, thanking him for his "courtesy in offering to assist in making the Library, as the President expressed it in his message, 'the National [sic] treasure-house of knowledge'." He then proceeded to explain his situation:

Your suggestion in regard to the purchase of books and other Library material and especially the employment of an agent, has been considered. We have no means at our disposal that may be directly applied as you suggest. Should purchases be made, a commission would be allowed, as has been the custom. This is, perhaps, a slender foundation upon which to rest any hope of aid from one with the accomplishments of the gentle-



men you describe. At the same time, it may be inducement enough for him to give our suggestion attention.

There might be publications issued by the Russian Government to be obtained upon application for preservation in our national library. Or, the Imperial Library might have duplicates which the authorities could exchange for our own publications. The Russian element in our population is already so large that we should like to have in our collection as complete a representation of Russian Literature, whatever pertains to Russian laws, history, revenues and customs, as possible . . .

By May 10, he had issued another circular, this time addressed to the secretaries of state in the several States in the American Union. It read as follows:

SIR:

Many of the States, in return for public documents received from the general government, have been good enough to send to the Library of Congress copies of all current session laws, statutes or acts, journals of the respective House[s], reports of state officers and from State Institutions.

With a view to learning what states send to the Library of Congress such publications and the regulations governing the same, together with the states that have no regulations at all, it would be deemed a favor if you would advise me whether there is any requirement of law in your state that documents of the nature referred to, or any of them, shall be deposited in our Library. As it is the aim of Congress to make this a national depository for books, we are anxious to supply, by purchase or otherwise, the volumes we need to complete our sets.

Meanwhile Mr. Day had informed Mr. Young that "in compliance with your request of the eighteenth instant [April 1898], our Ministers to Guatemala, Colombia, Peru and Chile have been instructed to request of the governments to which they are accredited, sets of the codes and laws of those respective countries for the use of the Library of Congress." Indeed, the stimulation provided by the circular to the foreign service had so far exceeded expectations that Mr. Spofford became alarmed. He dashed off a hurried note to the Librarian:

I have the very courteous and careful response to the document circular, of Mr. Hart, U. S. Minister to Bogota. I will prepare a list of all we have (which will be pretty large) of the publications of the Colombian government, to send him with the reply, which, as you suggest, should be full and explicit. I suggest in regard to this and to other offers of purchase, that it would lead to many duplications, and thereby needless reduction of funds, unless a report can be made of the titles of rare books offered. We are already so rich in Americana that for us to furnish lists of what are in the Library would be impracticable.

But even more important than Mr. Spofford's fears was the hearty approval of Senator George Peabody Wetmore, chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library. On May 18, 1898, he wrote to Mr. Young:

I have your letter of May twelfth, enclosing circular letter which has been forwarded through the Department of State to diplomatic and consular officers of the United States abroad. This appears to be a very excellent way of securing acquisitions for the Library. Within a day or two I have received a letter from a friend, Hon. Joshua Wilbour, Consul at Dublin, in which he says: "I have received a circular from Mr. Young, Librarian of Congress, and have written and sent him something, and hope later to see what can be done with the University here about the exchange of publications." I have no doubt our other representatives abroad will take equal interest in the matter.

Mr. Young was disturbed by the deficiencies in the collections. Every day his attention was directed to lacunae. It was necessary to do something about it and to that end he consulted Mr. Spofford, who on August 1, 1898, submitted a report which is more significant of the procedures he had always employed than as a reflection of the Librarian's own view. This was it:

Regarding the completion of the various editions of noted authors, together with publications illustrative of their works, this is a field worthy of assiduous cultivation. In fact, it has been for many years a cardinal object, in my reading of multifarious catalogues, to mark everything not already in the Library of a biographical and critical nature as to all leading writers of the world,

both ancient and modern. I have taken much less pains to secure the various editions (with a few illustrious exceptions), because, first, there has been no money for such duplication; and, second, the Library being usually supplied with the first, and some of the more valuable recent editions, could not be quite poor as a Library destined to supply the wants of literary and scientific students.

Now, in regard to your plan—while it should be kept steadily in view, it would not be economical to give the agents of the Library *carte blanche*, nor to authorize a dragnet (if I may use the expression) to gather everything to be picked up by agents. Such a course would be sure to lead to numerous duplicates, while if we pursue the enterprise by steadily marking the multitudes of catalogues—what we have not already—we shall buy no duplicates, and shall get exactly and fully what we want.

Another point: I have not been able to fall in with any classification of authors which will mark out some as “illustrious,” others as merely “eminent,” and a third as “noted.” Such distribution into categories—whether applied to authors or to the noted names of history—whether military or civil—quickly breaks down in the endeavor to assign particular names to particular classes. No two authorities can agree on anything beyond the first class, namely, of the *most* illustrious. However, passing this obstacle, I suggest that we, with our present funds, select a few of the more important authors to be completed on our shelves in the two directions—of various editions and of critical and illustrative comment. These, of course, should include most of those you name, with the reservation that it would be impossible in the existing state of funds to complete any considerable number. As to Goethe, for example, there are more than 4,500 volumes of or relating to him and his works—most of which are, of course, in the German language.

Nor do I think it necessary or important to buy every printed edition of Milton, Chaucer, Spenser, Dryden, Pope, etc., and the same may be said of all the ancient classical writers, from Homer down to Tacitus. At the same time, I should think it wise to order every book, as occasion serves, relating to any of these writers, without now attempting absolute completeness, except in a few cases, of which Shakespeare would stand foremost.

Your suggestion as to Bismarck—to include what can be gathered by both the London and Leipzig agents of the Library, is of first class importance; but they should be instructed to

confine the collection to posthumous comment, since the Library already has so much of the past literature.

But Mr. Young was insatiable. Two days after receiving Mr. Spofford's plea for selectivity, the Librarian wrote to Charles Page Bryan, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States of America, at Rio de Janeiro:

I am very anxious to obtain as much as we can from the Brazilian Government in exchange for our own publications, so as to have upon the shelves of the Library as good a representation of the history of Brazil as possible. In this, we are building up for the next century, or later on, perhaps when our American influence will be spreading over the continent.

Mr. Kimball, in charge of the Order Department, was swamped. On October 4, he reported:

My narrow quarters are becoming quite buried up by books which await your inspection and approval. Some of these are being called for from the Reading Room. I have cleared two German orders, and am at work on an order from Paris. Will you give me instructions regarding forwarding these—or continuing to hold them—in your absence?

While writing this, a truck-load of books from Allen has been brought up from the Mail Room, and I am informed that there are three boxes in addition which will reach me tomorrow.

Mr. Young was not well, when, on December 21, he addressed the following letter to General H. H. Bingham, chairman of the House Committee on the Library:

I beg to call the attention of the Committee to the advisability of detailing a member of our Library staff to visit Cuba and Porto Rico on one of the government transports now on constant duty between the United States and the Antilles, with the view of obtaining valuable volumes and manuscripts bearing upon early American history, which may be readily obtained now, in this time of change.

The Smithsonian Institution through timely effort, has already obtained available and useful objects. The Fish Commission has sent out an expedition and accompanying this is another representative of the Smithsonian who goes to



collect animal and botanical specimens for that Institution. An expedition sent out by the Coast and Geodetic Survey sails for Porto Rico on the 22d of December. Through the kind offices of the War Department arrangements may be made so that it will be possible for a representative of the Library to visit the Antilles and take advantage of the excellent opportunity thus afforded. Other expeditions, not on government account are under way. There is every reason for the belief that if we send a representative immediately he can accomplish results that will largely repay the time and money requisite.

I beg therefore to recommend that a sum of \$500 be appropriated as a special contingent expense and that it be made immediately available.

On the twenty-third, Mr. Young addressed Russell A. Alger, Secretary of War:

... The opportunities now offering for the collection of rare manuscripts, books and maps in Porto Rico and Cuba render it advisable to send a member of the staff of the Library of Congress to those islands for the purpose indicated above. I have accordingly authorized Dr. Herbert Friedenwald, the Superintendent of the Manuscript Department, to proceed on this mission, to Porto Rico and Cuba and I beg to ask whether transportation to Porto Rico and elsewhere can be furnished him.

I am informed that transports leave New York, as nearly as may be, every Wednesday, and if it be entirely agreeable to the War Department it would meet his convenience could he be permitted to sail on the transport leaving New York on Wednesday, January 11, 1899.

Should it be found possible to grant the above request, I would further respectfully bespeak for him a letter commending him to the military authorities in Porto Rico and Cuba, and requesting them to assist him in so far as may lie in their power, to the successful accomplishment of the mission entrusted to him.

At the same time he wrote to General Marshall I. Ludington, Quartermaster General of the Army:

... It has been determined to send a member of the staff of the Library of Congress to Porto Rico and Cuba in order to procure manuscripts, books and maps. Accordingly I have authorized Dr. Herbert Friedenwald, the Superintendent of the Manuscript Department, to proceed there for that purpose.

As I am informed that transports leave New York City each week, I would respectfully desire

to know whether it would meet with the convenience of the War Department to furnish him with transportation on the transport sailing from New York on Wednesday, January 11, 1899, and to render him such other courtesies as may lie within your power.

The way was cleared. On January 3, 1899, Mr. Young thanked G. D. Meiklejohn, Assistant Secretary of War, for his "courtesy in ordering Dr. Herbert Friedenwald of this Library to be furnished with transportation to Porto Rico and Cuba, and for the letter introducing him to commanding officers in Porto Rico and Cuba." And to General Ludington he acknowledged the advice that transportation for Dr. Friedenwald would be provided on the transport sailing Wednesday, January 11. The Secretary of the Navy, John D. Long, sent the good Doctor letters of introduction to the Naval officers in the Antilles.

Mr. Young had arranged everything. There was pathos and impending tragedy in the message which he sent Dr. Friedenwald on January 7:

... I am very sorry illness made me a prisoner. I am unable to transact any business, even to signing mere matters of form. I am glad you are getting away on your supreme journey under such pleasant circumstances.

So far as signing the instructions you forwarded me is concerned, I am not in a position to commit the Library to the disbursement of any funds outside of those appropriated by the Committees. I might be able by the first of July to make certain transfers of the funds which will enable me to accomplish the purpose you desire. The very best I can do, however, is to give you government authority and government transportation. If you will keep an exact account of your disbursements, I will endeavor to have the Committee on appropriations provide for them. This is as far as I can go and with this explanation, will leave the matter to your own judgment. Sorry I am too ill to write more.

On January 26, Ainsworth Spofford would cable Dr. Friedenwald: "Please return." Mr. Young, too, would have got away on a supreme journey, but be-

fore setting out he would have completed the blue print for a world library to serve his fellow countrymen.

### *Under the Hands of God*

John Russell Young, of Pennsylvania had been Librarian of Congress for six weeks when he confided his plan to Ainsworth Spofford and David Hutcheson in identical memoranda:

In the arrangement of the books in the new Library it seems wise that some special accommodation should be made for the blind. Under the operations of the copyright law, we must have on our shelves a large number of publications especially printed for the blind. These might be kept together and attendants deputed to give them special care. If the present reading room would be inconvenient, a room could be set aside in another part of the building. The idea is somewhat [nebulous] and there may be practical obstacles with which I am not familiar. At the same time, a special service for the blind would go far towards the complete idea of a national library. I respectfully submit it to you for consideration—with the view as to a practical way of realizing the best that can be done for those who in their infirmity rest under the hands of God.

Mr. Spofford's first reaction, as expressed in a note written on August 19, was a little less than enthusiastic: "In good time it will be richly worthy of the aims of our great institution to provide for the blind readers with peculiar care;" but "at present; it is not probable that any such readers (or if any, exceedingly few) would come nor are there in our collection more than a hundred books in raised letters." But by the next day, having learned, perhaps, that the Librarian's interest was inspired by Mrs. Young's philanthropic concern, and would therefore not be denied, Mr. Spofford outlined a procedure. "I suggest," he said, "that the first practical steps would be for you to address the 'American Printing House for the Blind,' Louisville, Ky., soliciting a complete list of their publications." The catalog could "then be checked off

by what we already have in the Library, and the Association would probably donate all others in print." As for the literature for the blind already in the collections of the Library, they were "mostly elementary works in science and Readers—tho' among them" were "Stopford Brooke's admirable 'History of English Literature,' Tyndall on Light, Life of Washington, some plays of Shakespeare, etc." Mr. Spofford further pointed out the fact that there were also "printed many standard works in history and fiction, in raised letters, by the 'Perkins Institution for the Blind,' Boston, of which we ought to have a list preparatory to a collection." In conclusion, he remarked: "the subject being of much interest, I send some Review articles upon it."

It was, indeed, a "subject of much interest." It was estimated, in 1897, that there were in the United States 35,000 blinded persons. A number of schools had been founded for their instruction, and books in a variety of raised characters were being published for their use. The Frenchman, Louis Braille, who as a child had lost his sight while working in his father's saddle shop, had, in experimenting with the cryptographic "point" system of Charles Barbier, in order to perfect a system of musical notation for the blind, produced a simple system of "point" writing which seemed to hold the fairest promise of a satisfactory method. Advocates of this type and that type violently argued relative merits, but it was becoming increasingly clear that before too long "braille would be accepted as the standard." By May 1892, a Braille typewriter had been invented, and this had been followed closely by a stereoplate-maker for impressing "point" characters into metal sheets. This had, of course, meant printing, and the problem of producing a literature for the blind had been economically assured.



Mr. Young was "very much gratified" with Mr. Spofford's suggestions, and hastily dispatched letters to the American Printing House and the Perkins Institution. He said to Mr. Spofford: "My thought is we have enough books in raised characters on hand to make a beginning and that it would do no harm for it to be understood that the National Library will take care of the blind as of other readers." And he issued one of his gentle orders: "If not too much trouble, it might be well in the moving to have all your raised books put into an alcove or one collection."

Mr. Young consulted with Alice C. Hunt, of Washington, and Helen Mary Campbell, of Gloria Point, "Tenallytown," Maryland, explaining his intention. He told them: "If this will be a success, it will give me great pleasure, as the subject is one very near to my heart."

To the authorities of the American Printing House he wrote asking for a list of their publications and inviting "any suggestions as to the perfection of this work." He was, he said, "endeavoring to set apart a portion of the National Library for the use of those afflicted with blindness." As a consequence, he was "anxious that the National Library should have a complete set of all works printed for the uses of the blind." To Michael Anagnos, the distinguished director of the Perkins Institution, he wrote on August 24, acknowledging a helpful communication. "It is my hope," he said, "to have in the National Library a complete collection of embossed books and, likewise, in pursuance with your suggestion, all literature relating to the education of the blind." He was sensible that "this will, of course, require time and opportunity, but the matter is very much in my mind and I shall do my best to realize your anticipations." On that day, the Brooklyn *Eagle* "broke" the story: Superintendent John Russell Young

has decided to introduce into the new Congressional Library a department for the blind. The library already contains a large number of volumes in blind letter, and it is Mr. Young's intention to make a complete collection of raised-letter books. A reading room will be set aside for this department, which will be the first of its kind in the country.

Mr. Young had not yet heard from the American Printing House when, on August 25, he sent the Perkins catalog to David Hutcheson to be checked against the holdings of the Library. "I shall be obliged," he said to him, "if you will give this matter special attention and give me your best advice as to the part of the Library that might be most conveniently set apart for the blind."

Mr. Young wrote, on August 28, to N. B. Kneass, of Philadelphia, asking him for a price list and catalog of all embossed books in his stock, and assured him that when the list had been "compared with what we have in the Library," he would "then give due consideration toward making our catalogue complete." The same day he wrote to Mr. Spofford: "Please send me, if convenient, a copy of the Act giving the appropriation to the American Printing House for the Blind, of Louisville, Ky." He had written to them, but they had "made no reply." It was his opinion that "if they receive an appropriation from the Government, they should certainly make some return to the Library."

Three days later Mr. Young thanked Mr. Hutcheson for "a list of the books, suitable for the blind, now in our National Library." It was, he said, "a better collection than I had supposed possible." And he added:

What I am anxious to do, however, is to make our list complete, and if we could, by any means, get a catalogue of all the embossed books in existence, an effort might be made to have them

gathered into the Library. I have no doubt that Congress would consent to any moderate appropriation to that end, but it is possible that an appeal to those who are especially concerned in the care of the blind might save Congress the trouble. Any thoughts that may occur to you in this matter I shall especially value.

On September 2, Mr. Young returned to the question of the American Printing House. He had read the related documents which Mr. Spofford had sent him. He had found in a report the statement that under the provisions of the Act of Congress, approved March 3, 1879, designed to promote the Education of the Blind, the Printing House received from Congress ten thousand dollars annually. If that was so he did not see "why we should not make, at least, equitable claim for a copy of their publications." He asked Mr. Spofford to "look over the Act and see whether the Report states the facts with accuracy."

Sometime during that morning he gave David Hutcheson complete responsibility for securing and fitting up a room. "By-and-by," he told him, "I will transfer the whole business to some subordinate, who will have more time to attend to the matter, but, for the present, it is a subject requiring intelligent consideration." The room selected was the northwest pavilion, on the ground floor, measuring about forty-eight by thirty feet, with a vaulted ceiling about twenty-one feet from the floor. The furniture consisted of a "mixture of old mahogany and walnut pieces from the Capitol, and some new oak chairs and tables and one desk, from the general supply for the new Library Building." Against the walls were placed countershelves to contain the two hundred odd volumes in raised characters which formed the collection. Etta Josselyn Giffin, an assistant in the Reading Room, was detailed to take charge.

When the new Library opened to the public, the Department of the Blind would

be ready. The addresses of about seventy blind persons would be found, and they would be invited to make use of facilities unique among the library facilities of the world. A week after its opening, Mrs. John Russell Young would organize a reading hour when ladies and gentlemen of Washington would read aloud passages and whole books of standard literature beyond the range and scope of the tactile collection then available for the handicapped. Within four months other libraries, in Philadelphia and Chicago and New York, would establish similar libraries for the blind. In 1913, Congress would enact legislation providing that "the distribution of embossed books manufactured by the American Printing House for the Blind at Louisville, Kentucky, out of the income of the fund provided by the Act of March third, eighteen hundred and seventy-nine, shall hereafter include one copy of every book so manufactured to be deposited in the Library of Congress at Washington." Within a few decades the Talking Book, phonographically reproduced, would take the place of the Reading Hour. And by 1946, the Division for the Blind, in the Library of Congress would distribute in a single year 232,876 sound recordings and 20,384 volumes in Braille to twenty-five regional libraries located throughout the United States for direct loan to blinded readers, while the Congress would have authorized an appropriation of \$1,125,000 for the extension of this work. In Mr. Young's words it would have gone "far towards the complete idea of a national library."

### *Congress Throws Open to the People*

Mr. Young was eager to extend the services of his "reference Library." The report of the Joint Committee, submitted March 3, 1897, had suggested "the advisability of such further appropriations as may be necessary for the employ-



ment of an additional force in order that the Library may be opened at night for the general public."

By December 1897, he had reached the conclusion that the matter could "not be urged with too much emphasis." Conditions peculiar to Washington life commended the proposal. Here, there were thousands of persons in the public service, whose hours of labor were, as a rule, from 9 to 4. At 4 o'clock the Library, unless Congress happened to be in session, was closed. Of these officials there were many who would "welcome the Library for purposes of study and amusement." It was denied them, and during their leisure hours they were "thrown upon social and domestic resources." Not only was the Library closed for reading, but, likewise, as a splendid public building, with all the beauty and splendor of its decorations, and as such worthy of study. Moreover, the Library was free from the conditions which made night opening inconvenient. On the contrary, it was ideally situated for evening service. It was fireproof. It had a complete electric plant. Each reading table had its light, while access to the shelves was as easy as during the day. Everything, in fact, was so well arranged that the Library could be opened without delay.

The annual expense was estimated at \$15,000. The force of reading-room attendants could be divided, one on duty from 9 to 4, and the other from 4 to 10. It had long been a cherished ambition of his predecessor. In January 1898, Mr. Young sent Senator Wetmore the petitions he had received from citizens of the District of Columbia.

The argument was persuasive; the legislative appropriation act approved March 15, 1898, contained an item for the purpose, which provided for evening service, beginning on October 1.

It was an instant success, and Mr. Young could report to Congress that "the results affirm the wisdom of its decree." During the month of October the average daily attendance was 247, while the largest evening attendance was 243 and the smallest 152. But it was the character of the evening users which provided gratification. They were "mainly students," with serious aims; who explored books of "history, science, military and naval works, and much pertaining to the Antilles, Manila and Spain." The United States was at war. But Mr. Young recalling, as had been wisely said, that there is no better university than a collection of books, concluded that "the action of Congress throws open to the people the opportunity of a university education." In any event, another step had been taken toward the completion of "the national library idea."

At the same time, the Librarian was glad to note that the Library was becoming, "as it were, a bureau of information, consulted by people from all sections." Twenty years before, and as a rule, "the Library was sought for a specific book;" to-day applicants asked "advice as to reading," or requested "special information." It was the policy of the Library "to encourage this spirit of inquiry." This often required "time and pains," but experience showed that answers could readily be found. No question was put aside until every channel of information had been exhausted. "Visitors to the Library in search of some one work on a special theme of interest" were "encouraged to consult others of the same character, and of which they, perhaps, had no knowledge." Inquiries by mail were "mainly requests for extracts from books or old newspapers, the history of cases before foreign tribunals, suggestions as to reading, help in research, and about genealogy and family history."

At the head of these services was little

Mr. Spofford, the Chief Assistant Librarian, who on March 2, 1898, gave this account of his "daily round of duties":

1. Active aid to the inquiries and researches of Senators, Representatives, Government Officials, and all those resorting to the Reading-room who seek information from him. This includes demands upon his time from very many persons, including writers of books, contributors to periodicals, college professors, teachers, clergymen, physicians, historical, political, and literary students, and in fact, the whole community of scholars. His life-long habit having been to be constantly and immediately accessible to inquiring readers, he has not deemed it proper to isolate himself, and has spent less than half an hour a day in his own room. This constant presence in the Reading-room seems necessary during the sessions of Congress, whose claims to prompt attention are paramount, not only that he may be seen without delay by those coming in person to the Library, but to answer their constant calls by telephone for authorities demanding special research in many cases where long familiarity with the sources of information is required. Regarding his aid to the other classes of inquirers named, he has at all times rendered it promptly and fully, though sometimes requiring much time, believing that such attention contributes in the highest degree to the usefulness and popularity of the Library service. This is the more important, since Mr. Hutcheson, whose comprehensive knowledge is well known, is necessarily absent from the Reading-room a good part of each day, directing those in charge of the book-stacks, assigning or re-assigning duties, watching incoming accessions, conferring with the Librarian, and discharging many time-consuming duties involved in the oversight of the Reading-room and the continual working of its machinery. The attention to the calls of general readers, so large and constant, demands the whole time of Messrs. Griffin, John Morrison, Hugh Morrison, and the two less expert waiters upon the public, Moore and Jones, aside from the daily return of books to the shelves—by the three latter.

2. Incidental to this service is the constant readiness to answer inquiries of all the Reading-room assistants, as to the authorship of books not known to them, indicating works on every subject (to save long hunting of catalogue cards), directions as to what chapter certain titles are to be sent, and all similar questions, prompt solution of which saves incalculable time in meeting the demands of readers.

3. The next important field of labor, within the province of the undersigned, is the supervision of the actual needs of the Library as regards accessions. This very wide field of inquiry calls for much time in reading and marking sale catalogues for such *desiderata* as may be found in them, as well as full examination of recent catalogues of other Libraries (including the subject-catalogues of the British Museum from 1880 to 1895) and Publishers' Trade Lists, literary journals and critical reviews from which to make up select lists of desirable books. I have been doing much of this work at home and on my way to and from the Library, because the interruptions to it are so constant from the attention demanded of me in the Reading-room service, that progress is comparatively slow. I have nearly completed two alphabetical lists—one of books ordered already authorized by you—the other of books deemed most important for speedy acquisition. These will be submitted to you in a very few days.

4. Another much less exacting labor is the answering of the letters of inquiry referred by you, as well as many others addressed to me directly, seeking information as to "best works," price and market for books, offers to sell, etc.

5. The revision with a careful eye of all books returned from the Bindery, to correct errors in lettering, etc., continues to be performed by me, and no book is suffered to go into the Library until it is found correct as to title, orthography, accents, etc.

Regarding suggestions as to defects of service, changes in administration, etc. I would prefer to make them the subject of verbal conference, as involving persons.

I am still of the opinion that we should as soon as possible enter upon the printing of a catalogue of accessions, quarterly rather than monthly (as involving fewer alphabets) and that this should be in form a dictionary catalogue—author and subjects in one alphabet.

A single suggestion I would offer is that the very frequent calls to show people over the Library and stack-room service should be largely curtailed, and if possible, limited to Congressmen or their families. It is an unreasonable interruption to the Reading-room service to take off from that department (more meagerly equipped in proportion to its work than any other) those whose time is demanded by readers, merely to gratify the curiosity of sight-seers (though friends of members) who can find the machinery fully described in the Library Hand-books.



He sometimes grew tired, but only once did he give in. At a quarter past four on the afternoon of July 8, 1898, he would leave a message for Mr. Young:

I am under stress of such absolute weariness, having been standing up three whole days finishing the rare book exhibits, that I must go to bed, instead of spending the evening at the Library as intended.

He was more than a man; he was his own "lengthened shadow."

### *The Circulating Library Business*

What was the character of this national institution to be? Would it, for example, become a vast loan service indiscriminately sending books to every corner of the United States, or would it limit its operations to those scholarly functions ordinarily subsumed under the unsatisfactory word *reference*, in which collections are made freely available only on the premises, but in which they may be consulted under expert guidance, supported by elaborate apparatus? Would the Library of Congress emerge, in other words, as a glorified public library or as a library intended primarily for research? Neither would be necessarily incompatible with the duties of a national institution, but the differences were so sharp as to require a choice.

Quite early in his administration, the newspapers carried a story which drew from Mr. Young an expression of his own view. In a note to Mr. Spofford, dated September 11, 1897, he wrote:

You did not send me the paragraph about the "circulating library" business. I need not say that this belongs to what Emerson called the "spawn of the press." I have never considered for a moment the idea of making the Congressional Library a circulating library. I am afraid, if I had my way about it, I should make it as exclusive as the British Museum, limiting as far as possible the number of those who have access to its shelves. So far as I know from experience, all of the great national libraries of the world are

exclusive, and I think in time, Congress will apply the same rule to this great collection of books.

It was to be the everlasting good fortune of the American people that, in this particular, Mr. Young did *not* have his way about it. The uses of the Library are perhaps more free from the taint of exclusiveness than those of any other institution of its size and responsibilities in the world, but the passage is important for the reason that it indicates a resolution to create a library of the reference type. Further evidence of this decision was contained in a note which Mr. Hanson, Chief of the Catalog Department, sent to the Librarian a few months later:

The first department [i. e. classification] to be built up by a reference Library in the state of organizing, is its bibliography. And we can well consider ourselves in the position of such a library.

But Mr. Young's opposition to the "circulating library business" was short lived.

On December 6, 1897, when Mr. Young sent his annual report to the printer, he had completely changed his mind. He wrote:

The question of a circulating department has been suggested as a further step in library development. Modern experience emphasizes the value of such an institution. It brings home the advantages of a library to those wanting in time for opportunity or study. The creation of such a library under existing circumstances would be largely a matter of administration, possessing as we do so much that is requisite for proper organization. To be useful, however, a circulating department should have several copies of current and popular books. Some circulating libraries have as many as fifty copies of a book on their shelves at the same time. This would imply an expense not incumbent upon a library of reference. There would, likewise, be wear and tear of books. In a population as small as that of Washington, there would not be the necessity for duplicates that exists in other cities, and the loss from wear and tear would be controlled by careful management.

The new Library, so far as the conveniences of the building are concerned, offers the highest advantages for the proposed circulation depart-

ment. There could be no question as to space and accommodation. There should be a distinct organization contemplating alone the needs of a circulating library. The books for circulation could be housed in their own stacks, and rooms now set apart for other purposes assigned to those in charge of them. The reading-room, especially in the periodical and newspaper department, would be open to those who came to borrow as well as those seeking reading or research.

While, therefore, the circulating department could be arranged upon lines corresponding with other sections of the Library, those, for instance, of maps, the law, and the graphic arts, it should be subordinate to the reference library and in no sense of universal scope a national treasure house of knowledge.

Keeping this ever in mind, and with judicious arrangement, there is no reason why, with a little expense, a circulating department of manifold usefulness might not be brought within the reach of the people.

This is interesting for two reasons: the first is incidental, it supplies the source of an allusion which President McKinley would make in his annual message; the second is interesting because if Mr. Young could not simultaneously have and eat, he wanted two pieces of cake.

When he received some proposals for an interlibrary loan service which would rest on the theory of a special service to scholarship, he was impressed by the opportunities which they offered. To J. C. Rowell, librarian of the University of California, Mr. Young explained his position; in a letter written February 24, 1898:

In reply to your circulars explaining the projected system of inter-library loans, I beg to state that in my judgment the project is one which ought to have the hearty support of every librarian. It is not, however, in my power to co-operate so far as this Library is concerned, as it has always been held by the joint Committee of Congress that the laws governing the Library of Congress do not permit of the books belonging to the Library being sent out of the District of Columbia.

He might, of course, have replied that he was authorized to make rules and regulations for the government of the Library and that, therefore, he would gladly pledge

participation; but the old rule was so deeply rooted that he wisely determined to await a changing sentiment in Congress. But the question of the withdrawal of books for use beyond the boundaries of the Federal City was recurring and sometimes embarrassing. And whenever it arose, Mr. Young firmly stood his ground. Thus, in July 1898, Mr. Spofford posed the issue:

Referring to the enclosed request from Representative Bennett, while the law is silent on the subject of sending books outside the city, it has uniformly been decided by the Library Committee that whenever such applications have arisen, the Librarian has not the power to send the books to the home residence of Members in the States.

Familiar instances of law books asked for in court cases in various cities; also, of novels, etc., for family readings, have always been refused, with the courteous explanation that the privilege of taking books from the Library is limited to the seat of government.

P. S. Any other course would tend obviously to the greatest abuse, besides scattering the Library over the U. S. to be loaned to all and sundry.

Mr. Young returned the memorandum with a penciled line scrawled in the corner: "Draft a courteous letter to the Member, and quote the law to him as a reason why we cannot send books away from the city."

### *Obstacles Unequalled*

Early in December 1897, Mr. Young completed the draft of his first report, which he had made as candid as he could, and sent it to Mr. Spofford for comment. Now Mr. Spofford was not only his Chief Assistant but his predecessor, a circumstance which, had it involved two less considerate and sensitive men, would inevitably have led to unpleasant difficulties. But in this case there was a complete understanding and a profoundly mutual admiration. Each was strong enough to accept and adopt the other's criticism. But if little Mr. Spofford had a tender spot it was the condition of the collections as they had left his charge, and, for that



very reason, he found certain portions of this draft report objectionable. Neither did he hesitate to say so, and to correct a misapprehension of the facts:

I return the remaining sheets of your report.

Your wish for complete detail and desire for suggestions tending to render it complete, impel me to say

1st. There are in some parts, expressions which, while entirely applicable to the material in the newly created departments, would be by no means true as applied to the Library of books. Congress should not be told that the latter is or was a "chaos," when they know to the contrary by the steady and incessant production of the books wanted, during all the years of stress and storm, in much less time than in the best organized libraries like the British Museum. And in some former passages, there was a want of discrimination (doubtless in the haste of writing) between the Library of books, and the many new departments which have for the first time been added to it by law. As I wrote the classification of the new Library in all these, and as it was adopted by Congress without change I know whereof I speak. The unorganized material consists of the masses of publications, not books, acquired by copyright, of maps and charts and manuscripts involving years of labor to catalogue in detail, of foreign documents and Smithsonian scientific serials, and of arrears of unbound periodicals (copyright) to be assorted and brought into use to complete sets. For all this, you are aware, it was a physical impossibility to provide, when the whole force of the Library staff had to be drafted off (with slight exceptions) to carry forward the ever pressing, ever increasing labors of the Copyright bureau. In short, I have been making bricks without straw for lo! these many years, and it is hardly fair to say that they are not good bricks, when Congress alone is responsible for their deficiencies. I know your hearty desire (as evidenced in other parts of the Report) to do justice to the diligent hard labor and organization which made the stupendous removal a success: but it should not be forgotten that Congress and the public have been served promptly in their wants for many years, in the face of obstacles unequalled in any Library in the world.

2. There are expressions in the Report (notably in the Periodical and Music Departments) which imply neglect. How can the Library staff of the past be said to have neglected what they had no means whatever to accomplish? It has been a

constant struggle for years with the Committees of Congress to get help adequate to do the work of the great establishment, and the Committees have always beaten in the struggle—for they had the heaviest guns.

3. The strength and the weakness of the Library are well exhibited in the summary, and I think it wise to insist much on the *desiderata* being *now* provided for. I correct some errors in specifying deficiencies which must have been reported to you on hasty search. Please restore the paragraph as to British Parly. Papers from 1816, a most important set. We lack the last 8 years (so far as the full bound set goes) owing to Great Britain not sending its International exchanges—all else is complete, and much of the later years in unbound form.

To conclude—the Report as a whole is comprehensive in scope, admirable in spirit and style, and rich in pertinent and broad suggestions.

But the state of these collections was indeed deplorable. Remembering that the first Library of Congress contained maps as well as books, it is surprising to learn from Mr. Phillips, on March 7, 1898 that "the condition of the large collection of maps as collected from the vaults of the Capitol was indescribably bad, not only from accumulated dirt; but also from wear and tear." Mr. Phillips continued:

They were dumped into the Hall of Maps and Charts in absolute confusion. A system of geographical arrangement had to be planned out and order out of perfect disorder. The maps of a very miscellaneous description had been collecting for many years. The Government had never a map department of this nature; the map publishing department of the Government, being collections only of specialties. No publication relating to the arrangement of maps, worthy of any attention, is known, so the difficulty of arrangement has been the greater. If the power to get at any map in a collection supposed to be over fifty thousand in a few minutes is a criterion of the present arrangement, I think it a good one and will be followed with such improvements as experience suggests.

Each sheet map has to be cleaned, mended and the most important ones mounted on cotton. Then it goes into a folded sheet of strong Manila paper equal to it in size. After this is done the paper is titled in the extreme left hand corner, with its subject, date and author.

It is then in a compact form, ready to be placed within a drawer or on a shelf and can be examined without danger to the map from frequent handling to find title and subject. Shelves will also be built to lay the large atlases upon in preference to standing them upright as this prevents sagging and injury to the binding. The most puzzling form of map to arrange is the roller map. They require, when very numerous as is the case in the Library, special furniture and even then are very difficult to handle. As most of the roller maps are varnished, time seems to stiffen them in a way to be almost unmanageable. The text rubs off and the size for purposes of examination is clumsy and difficult to consult. I . . . have decided to abolish the roller map by slicing them in sheets in number, according to the size. The sheets are connected together with narrow cotton tape and then folded and placed within Manila paper in the same manner as the sheet maps.

All this will require time as the collection of many years cannot be systematized in a few months. I have, however, so arranged the collection for present use that the Hall of Maps and Charts is open to the public, and visitors to the number of one hundred and fifteen since December have been assisted in important work, and various requests from the Reading Room and letters from the various departments and different parts of the country, satisfactorily answered.

Mr. Wells detailed from the Government Printing Office is an absolute necessity in this department. His work is of the best and without him we would be almost at a standstill. Under his skillful knife the roller maps are rapidly disappearing and many valuable maps are being mounted.

The letters sent to the various map publishing departments of the government, have been productive of good results. All have complied with our request except the Geological Survey.

Since my estimate of fifty thousand sheet maps in the Hall of Maps and Charts, I have received seven hundred and thirty-six from purchase and donations.

When the world realizes that there is a Map Department of the Library, I trust the number of donations may be greater. To do this I would suggest that Bulletins on various subjects be issued from this department as has been done in connection with Cuba. Copies of rare manuscript maps should be made and sent to the various libraries of the world and a system of exchange be instituted, which would be beneficial to the Library and World and the safety of the manuscripts would be also increased.

My time and that of my assistants have been so taken up with putting into shape and systematizing the large collection, that no cataloging to any extent has been done.

What was true of maps was equally true and equally alarming with respect to sheet music, prints of all kinds, newspapers, and periodicals. The manuscripts required arrangement. Perhaps for them "chaos" had not been too strong a word!

As for the condition of the Law Library, Mr. Spofford offered this comment:

Regarding the deficiencies of the Law Department, they are very considerable, although the collection is quite rich, in the American portion especially. The suggestion of adding to it an extensive collection of authorities on International Law is sufficiently met by the statement that the General Library is abundantly supplied in that field, and can be (as always) at all times drawn upon by the Justices of the Supreme Court, as by all others using the Library. International Law is far more closely related to political science and to history and diplomatics than to law proper, and that department has always been in the General Library, which does not neglect enriching it by all new books upon the subject.

The same remark applies to the Constitutions and Constitutional Conventions of all our States, of which the General Library has probably the most complete collection to be found. Why these should be duplicated, at very large expense (which would be necessary) for the Law Department of the Library is not apparent.

This is also true of the suggestion of placing there the sets of the collected works of many writers on polygraphic subjects, embracing legal science only in part.

The Catalogue should be prosecuted as rapidly as the daily labor of Mr. Clark and his aids permits, and the titles furnished for regular alphabetical incorporation in the new General Dictionary Catalogue of the entire Library.

John Russell Young, former Minister to Cathay, had other collections which demanded his attention. About one of them he wrote to his "dear friend," the Chinese Minister:

We have a small collection of Chinese books, purchased, I think, from the library of the late Caleb Cushing—our first minister to your country. I am anxious to have the collection cata-



logged or summarized in such a way that the Library may know what it possesses. It has occurred to me that some of your people might help us out by running over the volumes, and enabling us to know what they are. I am afraid this will be a trouble to you, but I know of no other way to ascertain just where we stand in Chinese literature. It is a department in which I am naturally interested and anxious to strengthen.

His Excellency Wu Ting-fang graciously complied, and the learned gentlemen connected with the Embassy prepared a catalog of 237 publications which was published as an appendix to Mr. Young's report for 1898.

And beyond the magnitude of the task of arrangement was the task of providing a bibliographical apparatus which would make these great collections available. The Library had then a card or manuscript author-catalog, "kept up to date and useful as a manual for the attendants." It had also eleven different volumes of printed catalogs published from time-to-time and of relative value. In subject cataloging there had been an arrearage since 1867, when that work was interrupted by the addition of "the bureau of copyrights, which from the very necessity of its requirements had the right of way over real Library work." Mr. Young announced in December 1897, that "the bringing of this catalogue up to date and at the same time introducing more scientific methods is among our present problems," for the reason that "for practical reading-room service nothing better can be expected than our present arrangement." And he continued:

By this it will be understood that every work of substantial value . . . is catalogued. This does not include trivial books, like dime novels and similar publications. Their exclusion is temporary, a part of the present exigencies, it being the intention to catalogue every publication, however unimportant, and give it due place. . . .

As an inflexible rule, no method of classification should be favored which would disintegrate the general collection. The Library of Congress

must ultimately be the universal library of the Republic. To that end the most magnificent library edifice in the world has been erected and is destined to be, it is to be hoped, the home of America's literary and artistic genius, supplemented and strengthened by that of all lands and all time. And now, when the work of organization is in a plastic condition, before what is done hardens and consolidates and becomes difficult of undoing, no step should be taken without considering not alone what is most convenient to-day, but what will be most useful a hundred years from to-day.

Therefore, in the work of classification, while each department maintains its representative character, the main purpose is the consolidation of the general library. What may have gone from its shelves to strengthen the medical or develop a law library, what may be contemplated in the way of a Congressional library of reference, can and should be replaced. But there must be no invasion of the general library's domain as one of universal reference.

Mr. Young was a wise and imaginative man. Perhaps he remembered the admonition of Lord Halifax: "A man must stoop sometimes to his star, but he must never lie down to it."

### *The Great Beginner*

The Library had matured; it had found its place; it had learned its duty; and, gratifyingly, the people of the United States had appreciated its worth. They made gifts to it; authors took pains to see that their works were ranged on its shelves; it received in return some of the encouragement it sought so earnestly to promote. But there was one experience which gave Mr. Young particular satisfaction.

On March 14, 1898, he received a message from Senator Hoar, of Massachusetts:

Mrs. Hubbard has asked me to draw the form of an offer of her collections, which I have prepared. I think before I show it to her I should like to show it to you. . . .

I expect to be very busy indeed tomorrow and later in the week. So perhaps you can see me to-day.

Gardiner Greene Hubbard, first organizer of the telephone industry, promoter of

education of the deaf, and founder of the National Geographic Society, had died the preceding December. A man of wealth and taste, he had been distinguished as a connoisseur and collector. It may be imagined, therefore, that Mr. Young found the Senator's visit especially interesting, and that he warmly approved the purpose for which it was arranged.

But Mrs. Hubbard herself did not make the proposal until March 21. On that day she wrote to the Librarian of Congress:

I hereby offer to the Congressional Library, for the benefit of the people of the United States, the collection of engravings made by my husband, the late Gardiner Greene Hubbard, and in addition thereto the art books, to be treated as part of the collection.

This disposition of the collection, the gathering of which was to him the pleasure of many years chiefly devoted to the welfare of his fellow-men, is in accordance with his wishes, and is that which would give him the greatest satisfaction.

I desire that a suitable gallery in the Library be devoted to this collection and such additions as may from time to time be made to it, to be known as the "Gardiner Greene Hubbard Gallery," where it can be accessible to the public, to be studied and enjoyed under such reasonable regulations as may be made by Congress or by the authority to whom Congress may delegate the control of the Congressional Library.

Accompanying the collection is a bust of Mr. Hubbard, by Gaetano Trentanove, which I desire may be kept in a suitable place in the gallery.

I propose during my lifetime to add to the collection from time to time, and in my will to make provision for increasing the collection by creating a fund of \$20,000, to be placed in the hands of trustees, the interest of which is to be used by the Librarian of Congress in the purchase of additional engravings, it being my understanding that the expense incident to the proper care of this collection will be borne by the Congressional Library, and not be a charge against this fund.

A week later, Mr. Young acknowledged "this act of munificence" and expressed "the gratitude which all must feel over so noble an addition to the art treasures of the nation." On March 30, he transmitted the offer to the Joint Committee on

the Library, pointing out that the collection had "long been regarded by expert judges of art, familiar with its contents, as in many respects the most instructive and valuable in the country." It contained, *inter alia*, the largest number of Rembrandt's in the United States. As for the conditions, he respectfully commended them to the favorable consideration of the Committee. A suitable apartment in the new building could be devoted to the collection which could be designated the Gardiner Greene Hubbard Gallery. Mr. Young concluded his letter with the statement: "a competent person will be detailed from the Library staff to take charge of the collection, have it properly catalogued and annotated, and see that, as Mrs. Hubbard requests, it is ever kept accessible to the public for their study and enjoyment."

On April 4, 1898, Senator Wetmore introduced a joint resolution "That the Librarian of Congress is hereby empowered and directed to accept the offer of Mrs. Gertrude M. Hubbard, widow of the late Gardiner Greene Hubbard, communicated to him by the following letter, on the terms and conditions therein stated, and to communicate to Mrs. Hubbard the grateful appreciation of Congress of the public spirit and munificence manifested by said gift." This was followed by the text of Mrs. Hubbard's letter of March 21.

When it came up in the Senate it was amended; instead of naming the gallery, as therein proposed, "the collection shall be known and styled as the Gardiner Greene Hubbard Collection, it not being, in the opinion of Congress, desirable to call parts of the public buildings after the names of individual citizens, and that the bust therein named be accepted and kept in a suitable place, to be designated by the Joint Committee on the Library." As amended the resolution passed the Senate and the House, and was approved by the President on July 7.



As winter came on, Mr. Young's friends were disturbed. He was, they said, working himself to death. Perhaps they were right. There was so very much to do, so much for which there was neither precedent nor experience to guide him. He had been first Librarian in so many things; first to administer the Library under its new charter, first who would not describe himself nor his office as merely "the organ of the Joint Committee," first to differentiate the collections by form, first to effect the staff organization which Congress had provided, first to preside over the Library's own building, first to struggle with a scientific classification, first to install a service for the blind, first to secure the opportunities which go with evening service, first to receive the promise of a trust fund, first to express the universal concept, and first to perfect the national principle.

On Christmas eve he suffered a serious fall on a slippery pavement, and on January 20, 1899, Mr. Spofford notified the superintendents of departments:

The Library will be closed on Saturday from 9 a. m. to 4 p. m., in respect to the memory of the late Librarian.

The Reading Room Department will be open from 4 to 10 p. m. Please notify those employed in your Department.

The Library had lost its Great Beginner.

### *First Rank Librarian*

In the spring of 1899, a young man with piercing eyes, red hair, parted in the middle, lustrous moustache, and fine features, his coat buttoned almost to the knot of the satin cravat, which surrounded a wing collar, sat in the tall-backed chair behind the Librarian's great desk. It was said that William McKinley had "put the right man in the right place," and that he was there "in response to the call of professional duty." But there was general agreement that "the opportunity and the

man together will make the headship of the library profession in this country—if not, indeed, the world over, for no national library has before it the great opportunity opening before the Library of Congress in its new home."

The January issue of *The Library Journal* had contained an appreciative review of John Russell Young's report as Librarian of Congress for 1898, which had concluded with this statement:

The report is comprehensive, careful, and shows a sincere appreciation of the proper scope and aims of the national library. It gives good reason for the confidence expressed by Mr. Young that "with the considerate care of Congress, and a due appreciation of what has been done and what as readily may be done through the support of the American people, there is no reason why the Library of Congress should not soon rival those splendid libraries over the sea, whose treasures are a people's pride and whose growth is the highest achievement of modern civilization."

But within a heavily ruled and leaded box, the same issue had carried this announcement:

As this issue of the Journal goes to press word comes of the death of John Russell Young, Librarian of Congress, whose record as a veteran journalist and diplomatist was rounded by his brief library career, in which, by the help of well-selected assistants, much progress was made toward building up a true National Library. It is earnestly to be hoped that the successor to be named by the President will be one fit to take up the good features of Mr. Young's administration, and may be selected to become a permanent and worthy incumbent of an important post, that should be absolutely disassociated from party changes.

Mr. Young had died on the seventeenth and hardly had the obituary appeared, before the public, the profession and the press indulged in speculation on the nature of the man who would be appointed to the place he had so distinguished. On the twentieth the New York *Daily Tribune* offered a comment on how perilous it had been for Mr. Young to hold the office. True, the *Tribune's* editor did not question

the success of his brief tenure, but it saw the danger of having a newspaper man at the head of "the foremost library of the country." He had started what was generally considered an auspicious administration by reason of the soundness of his judgment and demonstrated executive ability. But such a risk was not to be run again; only the "ablest professional talent in the field" should be considered. The *Tribune* harked back to the hearings of 1896 and remarked: "It was generally understood at that time that the scope of the Library of Congress was to be so expanded as to make it a National library." Then referring to the outstanding librarians who had testified on that occasion, the *Tribune* suggested: "At this juncture it seems entirely feasible to secure the services of one of these eminent men . . . to administer permanently the library . . . in keeping with the requirements of a truly National institution."

A week later, the *Tribune* published a letter from Nicholas Murray Butler urging the adoption of "a well-matured plan for the permanent administration of this library" in order that it might be possible entirely to disregard political considerations. Dr. Butler's concern was not suddenly inspired; on the contrary it was deep and long, for he was later to record these facts in his autobiography, *Across the Busy Years*:

I had taken a very great interest in the Library of Congress, in securing appropriations for the present [main] building and in working out an administrative scheme that would permit it to become a center of enlightenment and scholarship worthy of the nation. To this end it seemed to me important that the annual appropriations for the support of the Library be much increased and that a first-rate librarian be appointed by the President. I saw Speaker Reed on both these questions some time before the session of Congress opened and he promised me to support my proposals for larger appropriations for the Library and expressed his interest in the appointment of a suitable person to be librarian.

At the same time, (this had been in 1897), Dr. Butler had called on Mr. McKinley, explaining at some length that in his judgment what was needed was "a first-rate administrator with a knowledge of men and of books rather than a mere bureaucrat or a mere bibliophile." To this the President had agreed and asked Dr. Butler to suggest names. After discussing various possibilities, Dr. Butler had urged the appointment of James H. Canfield, then president of the Ohio State University. Mr. McKinley was impressed by the suggestion, and authorized Dr. Butler to sound out Dr. Canfield concerning his willingness to accept the post if offered. Dr. Canfield had consented to consider the proposal "most sympathetically," and armed with this information Dr. Butler had returned to the White House and asked the President to appoint him. But Mr. McKinley, "in his quiet way," had replied: "Butler, I am sorry to say that I can't do it. I have unexpectedly had to make another arrangement since you were here. My old friend, John Russell Young, had expected to go as minister to China, but he now tells me that his wife's physician advises that she could not stand the climate of Peking. He has therefore asked me for some appointment here at home, and the only thing I have to offer is the Library. I am going to appoint Young. You explain the facts to Doctor Canfield and tell him how sorry I am that I cannot appoint him."

And Young *had* been appointed, and after a brief but brilliant tenure he had died, and once again Dr. Butler had taken an interest in the Library's affairs.

But now, perhaps, the most intimate concern was that evidenced by the staff of the Library itself. Thorvald Solberg, the first Register of Copyrights revealed this in an article, written in retirement eight years ago, entitled *A Chapter in the Unwritten History of the Library of Congress*,



which was published in *The Library Quarterly* for July 1939. Shortly after Mr. Young's death, the chief clerk of the Library, Thomas Gold Alvord, Jr., confided to Mr. Solberg: "Shake hands with the next Librarian of Congress," and claimed to have strong backing for the post. Mr. Solberg and two colleagues, David Hutcheson, and J. C. M. Hanson, fearful of ill-considered action, quickly arranged a meeting of prominent librarians at the Murray Hill Hotel, in New York City, for the purpose of ascertaining a suitable successor to Mr. Young, and of explaining their position to the White House. The group had no difficulty in finding sympathy for its aims, and Dr. Butler agreed to come to Washington for another talk with the President.

But many names were urged on William McKinley in 1899. *The Library Journal* for February published an article, on *Libraries as Political Offices*, which contained this paragraph:

The vacancy in the librarianship of Congress and the expiration, with the close of the year, of the terms of various state librarians have given ample opportunity during the past month for the observation of political methods applied to library appointments. In the case of the Library of Congress, the post was sought by a host of applicants, many of whom evidently looked upon it simply as a political "plum." The following list of candidates . . . all of whom were recorded at more or less length in the public press, will give an idea of the mass of applications received, although in some of these cases it is probable that the names were suggested by the newspapers and that personal application was not made: Murat Halstead, Ohio politician and journalist, said to have the "support of the entire Ohio delegation"; Adjutant-General M. Fred Bell, of Callaway county, Missouri, who "has always had a very remarkable run of luck," and has "been given assurances of influential support"; Thomas J. Alvord, Jr., chief clerk of the library, formerly a journalist, and Cuban correspondent of the *New York World*, upon whom "the New York delegation is united"; William W. Rockhill, of Maryland, former Assistant Secretary of State and now Minister to Greece; Orville J. Victor, "a promi-

nent litterateur, formerly of Ohio and later of New York City"; Dr. Joseph Robbins, of Quincy, Illinois; H. B. F. Macfarland, Washington correspondent of the *Boston Herald* and *Philadelphia Record*; George Alfred Townsend, of Maryland, journalist and novelist; John Addison Porter, secretary to the President; Major John M. Carson, Washington correspondent of the *Philadelphia Ledger*, by whose nomination "the President would compliment the workers of the guild journalistic"; A. R. Spofford; Gen. J. C. S. Clarkson, formerly head of the Republican National Committee, and First Assistant Postmaster-General under President Harrison, whose appointment would be "enthusiastically requested by the entire Iowa delegation"; Charles M. Pepper, journalist, for many years connected with the *Chicago Tribune*; Bernard R. Green, superintendent of the Library of Congress; John Tregaskiss, of Brooklyn, journalist and veteran of the Civil War; Gen. H. V. Boynton; Henry Watterson; James H. Canfield, president of Ohio State University. These are but a tithe of the names presented formally or informally for the President's consideration, and in most cases the "qualifications" of applicants were chiefly political or military service.

And there was Samuel J. Barrows, of Massachusetts.

That then was the situation early in February when William Coolidge Lane, president of the American Library Association and librarian of Harvard University, had hurried to Washington to make the profession's representations to the President. He had already written to Mr. McKinley saying "Librarians recognize that the Library of Congress is in fact the National Library of America, and that, as such, it should stand at the head of American libraries, as the best organized and the best equipped of all." Moreover, he pointed out that the Librarians "also see that under the right conditions it can be made a leading factor in the educational and intellectual life of the country, and will exercise an important influence on the progress of the library movement." From these considerations it followed that "the director of a library so large and with such varied activities must have more

than mere intelligence, general education or literary culture." Indeed, such a man "must have to an unusual degree the capacity for administration on a large scale, involving the wise adjustment of many departments; he must have tact and firmness and breadth of view; and the position also calls for a familiarity with library affairs and successful experience in the actual management of a large library." Therefore, he most respectfully urged the President not to "make the appointment to the Library of Congress without giving careful consideration to the possibility of obtaining a man who has already proved his ability in this work."

On February 3, Mr. Lane had gone to Washington, and "through the courtesy of Senator Lodge," had been introduced to the President. "It was," Mr. Lane recounted later, "a satisfaction to find that the President already fully realized the importance of placing over the Library of Congress a trained librarian of proved administrative capacity". It seemed apparent that in the President's mind "the librarian might be in reality, as he is by law, entirely independent of political control in making appointments and removals, and that the salary, if inadequate to command the services of the best librarian in the country, could probably be raised." These assurances had given Mr. Lane "new hope that a really strong appointment might be made, and the result of the interview was that, without any solicitation" on his own part, he had been authorized to offer the appointment to Herbert Putnam, the President remarking that he had tried to secure his services prior to his selection of John Russell Young.

And so, back in Boston, Mr. Lane had communicated the President's offer to Mr. Putnam, making as strong a plea as he could for the opportunity that was then

at hand to give the Congressional Library the organization it required, and place it once and for all at the head of American libraries. Mr. Putnam had asked for two days to think it over, and after consultation with his friends and associates, and "at the urgent advice of all librarians who were aware of the circumstances," he had signified to the President "his readiness to place his services at the President's disposal."

But obstacles had interposed. Mr. McKinley had also spoken well of the candidacy of Samuel June Barrows, an erstwhile divine and now a reluctantly retiring member of the House of Representatives who immoderately indulged an aspiration to the office. Indeed, he must impatiently have awaited news of Mr. Young's death for the day after, he had written Mr. Lane, stating that his name had been presented to the President by John Davis Long, Secretary of the Navy, and asking the indorsement of the American Library Association. This had been refused on the grounds of his lack of training and experience, but the disappointment had not deflected his determination. The New York *Tribune* for February 2, had made an interesting disclosure in printing a letter allegedly sent by Mr. Barrows to every member of the Senate. Its contents were:

My Dear Senator: I have been informed by Secretary Long, whom I have known for more than twenty years, that, without consulting me, but simply from his knowledge of my history, experience and predilection, he has cordially recommended me to the President to succeed my friend, John Russell Young, as Librarian of Congress. I have already been indorsed by the Massachusetts Senators and the entire Massachusetts delegation in the House; also by ten Senators and some forty Representatives, and more have promised their support. As members of both houses are brought into personal relation with the Librarian, I should like to know whether my appointment would be acceptable to you, providing you have no candidate from your



State. If you would like to talk with me on the matter I will gladly see you and lay before you indorsements I have received.

Cordially yours, S. J. Barrows.

Then, on February 7, the same newspaper had reproduced a portrait of Mr. Barrows captioned "The New Librarian," announcing that an unconfirmed report of his appointment had been received. Regardless of the Rev. Mr. Barrows' merits, and doubtless he possessed many, Mr. Putnam had found himself in a position of implied delicacy and had thought it best to withdraw his acceptance of Mr. McKinley's offer. On February 14, the President's secretary had telegraphed Mr. Lane:

The President received with deep regret Mr. Putnam's message that he did not feel at liberty to accept the tender to him of the office of Librarian of Congress. The President felt that his appointment would be most fitting, and was anxious that the library should have the benefit of his ripe experience. After Mr. Putnam declined, the President notified Mr. Barrows, who had been strongly recommended by literary men and librarians as well as by public men, that he would nominate him for the place.

Meanwhile another candidate had entered the lists, championed by the ardent Henry Adams, who was strongly of the opinion that political considerations should not dictate the choice. From his published letters it is established that he had hoped that the office might go to William Woodville Rockhill, and that he had been sorely vexed when his strivings had been put aside. In a letter to Elizabeth Cameron, dated February 19, 1899, he recalled:

You know how hard I have been trying to get Rockhill into the Library. Hay strongly pressed him, and was supported by all the best influences in the Cabinet, and by the President's own judgment. But Secretary Long inspired a beaten Massachusetts Congressman named Barrows to apply for the place, and Barrows invoked with more than usual violence the usual political machinery. This alone should have excluded

him, for libraries ought not to be political jobs; but of course Long and Barrows invoked their Senators and, as usual, our noble statesman Cabot went every day to the White House to press on McKinley an appointment which he knew to be exceedingly unfit, and which he did not want to have made, and which he knew would disgust his own wife and children as well as Hay and me and the Senate. I never saw Cabot more apologetic; it was so bad that I retired into total silence; but you can imagine Hay's comments. Finally, the President followed our wishes so far as to offer Barrows the Greek mission, with a view to shifting Rockhill to the Library. Barrows refused. Then the President yielded, and sent his name to the Senate, where Cabot now hopes it will be rejected!

It may be that Mr. Rockhill had been disappointed when Henry Adams' efforts on his behalf came to nought, but it is gratifying to know that his friendship for the Library of Congress was unshaken. In addition to gaining eminence as a diplomat and statesman he was also an avid collector of Far Eastern literature and in the course of a few years presented some of his valuable Chinese holdings to the Library. They were eventually to become, along with a gift from a Chinese Emperor and the Caleb Cushing Collection, a basis of the future Orientalia Division.

It is a matter of record that President McKinley had nominated Samuel June Barrows for the office, on February 15, 1899, and it is equally a matter of record that on February 28, Senator Henry C. Hansbrough, for the Committee, had reported adversely on the nomination. Congress had adjourned on March 4, without a vote having been taken on the librarianship, whereupon President McKinley had offered a recess appointment to Mr. Barrows. This had been declined and the way had been opened to ask Herbert Putnam once more to accept the position. No time had been lost in the re-opening, nor had any been lost in the settlement. On March 13 the President had made a recess appointment of Herbert Putnam to the librarianship of Congress;

he took the oath of office on April 5, his nomination was sent to the Senate on December 6, and confirmation was duly returned on December 12. A new era for the Library had begun.

And that is how a young man came to be sitting in the Librarian's chair in the spring of 1899. Dr. Butler, who unequivocally approved both the young man and his posture, attributed his seat to "the efforts of Senator Hoar of Massachusetts."

Herbert Putnam, son of George Palmer and Victorine (Haven) Putnam, was born in New York City, on September 20, 1861. His father, one-time collector of internal revenue in New York, by appointment of Abraham Lincoln, was the founder of the publishing house, which with the addition of his sons, still bears his name. His secondary education was received at the hands of James H. Morse, headmaster of a school on upper Broadway, from whence he was admitted to Harvard in the summer of 1879. Graduating with an A. B., in 1883, he returned to New York, and spent the following academic year in attendance at the law school of Columbia University. In the autumn of 1884, he accepted the post of librarian of the Minneapolis Athenaeum, where he modernized antiquated methods, revised the charging records of books on loan, inaugurated a new system of cataloging and classification, opened the alcoves to readers, stoked the stove which warmed his office, got admitted to the Minnesota bar, and discovered that "there are two great problems of library management, one to get the books for the readers, the other to get the readers to the books."

Following a visit to the British Isles in the summer of 1887, where he visited the provincial towns as well as the large cities, and where, at second hand, he purchased some 8,000 volumes for the collections of the Athenaeum, he returned to Minneapolis and in the fall of 1888, published an

article, perhaps, his first, in *The Unitarian Review*, entitled, *Simplicity as a Test for Truth*, an essay on the ethical teachings of Tolstoi. He was chosen to be first city librarian of Minneapolis two months later, and a building costing nearly \$400,000 was erected under his supervision, which was considered one of the three or four best equipped structures of its kind in the United States. Under his direction the collections grew and when he left Minneapolis, his Library ranked fifth in the United States in terms of circulation, and occupied a similar position in the matter of income.

For personal reasons he resigned that position in December 1891, removed to Cambridge, Massachusetts, was admitted to the Suffolk bar, and practiced law in Boston until the 18th of February, 1895, when, "with no solicitation on his part, but selected by the trustees because of his proved capacity and brilliant executive reputation," he was elected librarian of the Boston Public Library. That old institution had struggled along without a director for two years and was in a state approaching disorganization. The new building, on Copley Square, had been recently completed, but it was to be Mr. Putnam's task to open it and make its resources available to the public. In this he was conspicuously successful.

The juvenile room, believed to be the first room devoted wholly to the service of children in any of the larger libraries of the United States, was equipped with appropriate tables and chairs and books and proved so acceptable an innovation that the service was promptly extended to the branches. A new impetus was given to cooperation with the school system; the interlibrary loan service was reorganized and its scope was widened. In addition a special libraries department was created another hour was added to the evening opening; a separate reading room for news-



papers was set aside. A successor, the late Charles F. D. Belden left this account of Mr. Putnam's accomplishments in Boston:

When Mr. Putnam assumed charge there were 9 branches and 12 delivery stations. At the end of his 4 years there were 10 branches, 5 minor branches, called "reading rooms," and 56 deposit stations. The direct home circulation increased from 832,113 in 1894 to 1,245,842 in 1898. The library grew from a total of 610,375 volumes at the close of 1894 to 716,050 at the close of 1898.

He was, as the secretary of his Harvard class proudly proclaimed: "a progressive, original, practical, and tactful Commander, with a positive genius for creating enthusiasm and interest among his subordinates." He brought these qualities to Washington.

As one of the seven representatives of the American Library Association who had testified before the Joint Committee in December 1896, he had reached certain precise conclusions as to the place and purpose of the Library of Congress:

This should be a library, the foremost library in the United States—a national library—that is to say, the largest library in the United States and a library which stands foremost as a model and example of assisting forward the work of scholarship in the United States.

Incisively he replied to queries and volunteered information on the principal features of sound library administration and management, including the best methods of recruiting a staff, the organization of collections, the acquisition of material, and the formation and arrangement of catalogs. In his opinion the transfer to the new building would present problems inevitably unforeseen. On that subject he spoke with feeling for the reason that unanticipated difficulties had arisen in connection with the removal of collections to the recently completed public library over which he then presided.

Mr. Putnam had submitted his testimony on December 1 and 2, 1896.

Returned to Boston he had written a letter to supplement it, which he offered as a revised and considered statement. That letter had contained these passages:

I. *Scope of the Library*.—The material to be gathered by the Library should, in my opinion, assume the following in order of importance:

1. Actual legislation in the United States and of other countries, and all documentary matter embodying or pertaining to the same.

2. All material entered under the United States copyright law.

3. Law.

4. Other Americana so far as practicable. Here, first, some consideration must be given to the contents of other libraries reasonably accessible. For instance, the first Latin translation of the first letter of Columbus describing his discovery of America is in the Boston Public Library. It more properly should belong in the National Library, but I should not regard the expenditure of \$2,800 as expedient in order to purchase for the National Library a duplicate of it.

5. Of general literature, chiefly the following: (a) The history of this hemisphere; (b) the history of foreign countries; (c) sociology, particularly in so far as it bears upon Federal legislation already enacted or such legislation likely to be enacted, or under discussion, hereafter. . . .

If, as is to be hoped, the National Library will be able to catalogue once for all the new publications under the copyright law, to print these catalogue entries upon cards, and to furnish duplicates of these cards (for some proper charge) to other American libraries, it will be important that it adopt both a form of entry and a size and weight of card that will render these duplicates capable of insertion in the catalogues of these other libraries. . . .

Those of us who were present [at the hearings] were, I think, in substantial agreement upon the main points upon which we were questioned. On one point in particular we were very strongly in unison—that the enlargement of the scope, function, and equipment of the Library should at all events mean this: That while personal mediation between the reader and the books should be retained, while, indeed, every effort should be made . . . to extend the area of personal mediation, nevertheless an endeavor should now be made to introduce into the Library the mechanical aids which will render the Library more independent of the physical limitations of any one man or set of men; in other words, that the time has come when Mr. Spofford's amazing knowl-

edge of the Library shall be embodied in some form which shall be capable of rendering a service which Mr. Spofford as one man and mortal cannot be expected to render.

These suggestions had been presented for the consideration and guidance of an unknown and impersonalized Librarian of Congress. He was now that man and he knew his mind. He would put most of them into effect, revise some, and add others in the course of forty years. But one point had been settled with the completion of the building: the Library of Congress had become, once and for all the National Library. That was the meaning of his appointment and the ground of his acceptance.

For Mr. Putnam, the first duty was "to get the house in order." How formidable was that task may be readily realized from a review of the situation as it existed when first he examined it with a "responsible eye:"

The building stood as planned: The outside quadrangle, the octagonal reading room centered within it, and the three main book stacks radiating from it—north, east, and south—to the quadrangle itself. For the accommodation of material there were those three stacks, providing for about 1,800,000 volumes; for the accommodation of readers, the main and the periodical reading rooms; and for the accommodation of the service, besides the copyright office, spaces and equipment here and there in the outside quadrangle. The printed books and pamphlets had been shelved in the stacks; the manuscripts were cased in a corner pavilion; but the maps, music, and prints remained still on the floors or in packing cases.

Exclusive of the current work, rapidly increasing with the passage of every year, there were alarming arrearages, consisting of huge masses of material to be arranged, repaired, classified and cataloged. So far as it was possible to reflect the condition in terms of figures, it was this:

*In the Catalog Department.* Seven hundred thousand volumes and 250,000 pamphlets to be reclassified, assigned new numbers, and shelf listed. Seven hundred

thousand volumes and 250,000 pamphlets to be subject-cataloged. Author cards to be written for 200,000 pamphlets and verified and rewritten for 700,000 volumes. All cards to be seen through the press and arranged in a dictionary catalog in triplicate.

*In the Graphic Arts Department.* Fifty thousand five hundred and eighty-nine prints to be classified and cataloged, exclusive of 20,000 prints in the Hubbard Collection.

*In the Proposed Documents Division.* More than 50,000 volumes of documents to be specially cataloged and checklists drawn off and seen through the press.

*In the Manuscript Department.* Nineteen thousand one hundred and sixty manuscripts to be cataloged; 24,696 manuscripts to be calendared.

*In the Hall of Maps and Charts.* Fifty thousand sheet maps to be cataloged. All important maps in the books of the Library to be indexed.

*In the Music Department.* Two hundred and seven thousand pieces of music to be assorted, classified and filed; 237,000 pieces to be cataloged under author and title.

*In the Law Library.* Six thousand volumes of French laws to be cataloged.

*In the Periodical Department.* Many tons (number not computable) of periodicals and newspapers to be sorted, collated, made up into volumes, missing numbers supplied, prepared for the binder, and, when bound, arranged and cataloged. All copyrighted matter to be distinguished.

*In the Copyright Office.* Eight months arrearage of 50-cent entries to be made up (say 50,000 entries). Deposits amounting perhaps to nearly 200,000 articles to be arranged in sequence and shelved. Deposits to an amount not computable to be credited and indexed.

*In the Proposed Binding Department.* Over 100,000 volumes and pamphlets to be repaired or bound.



The Mail and Supply Service was staffed entirely by details from other departments; the order work was being performed by the assignment of three assistants from the Catalog Department; there was a chief of a "blue-print" Department of Bibliography, provided by the detail of an "assistant"; but there was no force at his disposal.

As to the state of the collections Mr. Putnam found:

*Documents and Exchanges.* The present collection was "exceedingly defective." It might "be built up only by incessant solicitation, exchange and purchase." This would require the supervision of "a man of thorough education, special training, system and vigor."

*Maps and Charts.* "One of the most important [collections] in the Library, and of extreme importance to other departments of the Government in matters (such as the Alaskan boundary) of grave concern." The collection was "in maps relating to America, the largest in the United States. Over 50,000 maps to be handled; 50,000 sheets maps yet to be cataloged; thousands of books to be examined for maps to be specially indexed."

*Music.* The collection to be handled consisted of 277,000 pieces, to which were added yearly nearly 15,000.

*Prints.* The Department had to handle a collection of engravings, etchings, photographs, lithographs, and other reproductions, amounting to 70,623 items, and increasing at the rate of 11,000 yearly.

Concerning the technical processes, Mr. Putnam found that:—

*Catalogue and shelf.*—The present classification of the Library is but a slight expansion of that adopted by Thomas Jefferson in 1815 for his library of 6,700 volumes. It is meager, rigid, inelastic, and unsuited to a library of a million volumes. The entire library must be reclassified.

An indispensable record in a library is a list of the books composing each class as they stand on the shelves, and identifying them by their accession

numbers. This is called the "shelf list." It is the basis of every inventory. There is no shelf list of the 700,000 books and 250,000 pamphlets in the Library of Congress. One must be written.

The minimum catalogue for a library of this size is a card catalogue which will tell—

1. What books the Library has by a given author.

2. What books the Library has upon a given subject.

There should be at least one copy of such a catalogue for the use of the public as well as the one (in the catalogue room) for official use, and in the case of the Library of Congress there should be a third for the use of Congress at the Capitol.

The only general catalogue which the Library now possesses is a single copy of one by authors. It is kept behind the counter, and is for official use only. It is for the most part in manuscript, and on cards of a size that can not be continued.

The Library has no general subject-catalogue whatever, and no general catalogue whatever accessible to the public or which may be placed at the Capitol.

The work of the catalogue-shelf department is—

1. To classify, locate, enter on shelf lists, number and catalogue the current accessions to the Library in the form of books and pamphlets. During the year beginning July 1, 1900, these are likely to exceed 40,000 volumes.

2. To reclassify, relocate, enter on shelf lists, and renumber the entire existing collection of books and pamphlets [about 1,000,000 pieces].

3. To catalogue under both author and subject 200,000 pamphlets not yet catalogued at all.

4. To make a "dictionary" catalogue of the entire existing collection of books. New author cards must be written in revision of these present author cards, but fuller in analysis; and subject cards must be written, for which there is no present basis.

5. All the above cards must be seen through the press.

Estimating the present collection as for this purpose only 800,000 books and pamphlets, to reclassify and "shelf list" it might require a force of 116 persons working an entire year, at a cost of \$98,020.

To reclassify, shelf list, and catalogue it (on the dictionary system) in one year might require a force of 448 persons, at a cost of \$383,000.

To accomplish it in five years might require a force of 91 persons (26 in classification, 65 in cataloguing), at a compensation of \$84,340 per annum.

The Library had but one wagon, and would soon require two horses whose maintenance would cost \$650 annually. Mr. Putnam hoped that Congress might replace them with an electric automobile.

Therefore, in the light of these considerations, when preparing his budget estimates for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1900, Mr. Putnam revised the administrative structure of the Library to consist of: (1) an Executive Department, including the Librarian of Congress, the Chief Assistant Librarian, the Chief Clerk, the Librarian's Secretary, and two minor officers, (2) a Mail and Supply Department, (3) a Packing and Stamping Department, (4) an Order (purchasing) Department, (5) a Catalog and Shelf Department, (6) a Binding Department, (7) a Bibliography Department, (8) a Reading Room Department, (9) a Periodical Department, (10) a Documents and Exchanges Department, (11) a Manuscript Department, (12) a Maps and Charts Department, (13) a Music Department, (14) a Prints Department, (15) a Smithsonian Department, (16) a Congressional Reference Library at the Capitol, (17) a Law Library, and (18) a Copyright Department. This involved an increase in personnel from 134 to 230. In addition he requested \$50,000 for the increase of the collections.

When the Legislative Appropriations Act was approved on April 17, 1900, *divisions* had taken the place of *departments*.

Congress was generous; "the estimates were accepted . . . and appropriations granted in substantial conformity therewith." Among other provisions the act reorganized the service in accordance with the proposals, and created in the "main Library" four new divisions (order, bibliography, documents, binding), and 81 additional positions; together with 15 additional clerkships in the Copyright Office. Ordinarily these new positions would have become effective only after

June 30, 1900, but in recognition of the great arrearage of work for which, in part, the new employees were needed, it was provided that the majority of them might be employed from the date of the passage of the act.

At the beginning of fiscal 1901, the work of cataloging and classification was in the hands of 46 assistants, and there had been brought into existence a public catalog, an official catalog, a shelf list for the literature of bibliography and library science, and a special author catalog for the Congressional Reference Library maintained in the Capitol. There was still an awkward, three-way classification system which Mr. Putnam referred to as the old, the intermediate and the new. The new, however, was in process of development.

The amount of money for the increase of the collections had risen to \$31,680. In his constant endeavor to augment the Library's holdings the Librarian specifically mentioned three needs: (1) the compilation of special lists systematically enumerating desiderata in each field of knowledge; (2) the stimulation of exchanges; (3) the reorganization of purchase methods abroad. In June 1900, he visited Europe in pursuit of these objectives and established satisfactory relations with the antiquarian dealers, scholars and officials of foreign countries, particularly in the bibliographic centers of London, Paris, The Hague, Amsterdam, Brussels, Vienna and Berlin. A personal explanation of the Library's organization and objective actually went far toward securing materials from overseas, especially toward securing the publications of other governments.

Of great importance to the service rendered by the Library was the opening, on January 22, 1900, of the Periodical Reading Room. The informal use to which it was subjected precluded the compilation of accurate statistics, but the figures for the Main Reading Room were issued as



previously. There, during the last year 123,844 readers had consulted 364,396 volumes, and of these 17,898 had been withdrawn for use at home. Some present day sympathy is aroused by the Librarian's declaration that statistics were given "only in accordance with custom," because "The service of a Library such as this is not to be measured by the number of readers nor by the number of books issued. An ample answer to a single inquiry may be of more importance to Congress and to the community than a hundred ordinary books issued to a hundred ordinary readers. In service to scholarship the unrecorded use may far exceed in value that which may be made matter of statistic."

Far from neglecting statistics, however, the Librarian gave the following summary of the institution's holdings:

Books and pamphlets.....	995,166
Manuscripts.....	27,278
Maps and charts.....	55,717
Music.....	294,070
Prints.....	84,871

and these figures were to increase rapidly and consistently in the years to come.

The institution was already large when the Librarian prepared his report, but its potential for service was unrealized either to its primary or secondary constituency. Mr. Putnam in a brief contribution which he made to *The Outlook* (for May 12, 1900) entitled *The Library of Congress*, put it this way—

Now, in comparison with its possible opportunities, the service at present rendered by the Library of Congress is both trivial and narrow. . . . The primary duty of the Library of Congress is to Congress. It has secondary duties: (1) to the Executive Departments and Scientific Bureaus in Washington; (2) to scholarship at large. . . . The Library is not now rendering ample or efficient service either to Congress on the one hand, or to scholarship at large on the other. It is rendering effective service as a reference library for the District of Columbia; but such a service scarcely justifies a seven-million-dollar plant, maintained at an expenditure of over a quarter of a million dollars a year.

The Librarian carried this thought much further in his Report for 1901, where his own words are more expressive than any paraphrase:

The Library begins the new century, therefore, in a condition far advanced over that in which it began its career in the new building. During the past four years it has been active in direct service, but still more active in preparation for a larger and wider service. It is now in a position to consider and determine what the service shall be:—to Congress, to the Executive Departments and scientific bureaus of the Federal Government, to other libraries, and to scholarship at large. . . . Its future opportunities appear in its constitutional relations, its present and developing equipment, its organization, the character of the material which it now has, and its resources for increase. I have thought fitting, therefore, to incorporate with this Report a summary of the present facts concerning each of these. It forms Part II of the Report.

The second part of the report, upon which the Librarian was placing so much hope for expanded operations, was a "Manual" containing, among other data, the Library's "Constitution, Organization, Methods, etc." The constitution, of course, was contained in no single organic act; it was on the contrary an outgrowth and accumulation of many laws affecting the Library.

The year 1900-01 was notable for the initiation of two national services. One of these was announced by the Librarian in his official report, the other was not mentioned in that document but was subsequently mentioned elsewhere. Both were of far-reaching importance to the libraries of the United States, and have become fixtures of the Library's operations.

The first was the establishment of a system for the distribution of printed catalog cards, whereby duplicates of the cards made and printed in the Library of Congress for its own uses, are made available at nominal cost to other libraries, organizations and individuals everywhere. It will be remembered that Mr. Putnam

had made reference to such a possibility in his letter of December 7, 1896. The practice effected economies for the profession, enormously furthered the spread of bibliographic knowledge, and brought reciprocal benefits to the Library of Congress itself which are as permanent as the benefits to others. The two primary objectives were, in Mr. Putnam's words:

First, to place in each local center of research, as complete as possible a statement of the contents of the national collections at Washington; second, to enable other libraries to secure the benefit of its expert work in cataloguing and in printing cards for, books acquired by them as well as by it, and to secure this benefit at a cost which, while a full reimbursement to the Government, is to the subscribing library but a fraction of the cost of doing the entire work independently.

A long and detailed statement was prepared for release to the press. It pointed out the savings to the profession, estimated the value of the service both to bibliography and to education, and spoke of the many appeals from the Nation's libraries for precisely this kind of centralized cataloging. In the release the Librarian observed: "The Library of Congress cannot ignore the opportunity and the appeal. It is, as I have said, an opportunity unique, presented to no other library, not even to any other national library." Elsewhere, he reported:

There are many difficulties of detail, and the whole project will fail unless there can be built up within the Library a comprehensive collection of books, and a corps of cataloguers and bibliographers adequate in number and representing in the highest degree (not merely in a usual degree, but in the highest degree) expert training and authoritative judgment. But the possible utilities are so great; they suggest so obvious, so concrete a return to the people of the United States for the money expended in the maintenance of this Library; and the service which they involve is so obviously appropriate a service for the National Library of the United States, that I communicate the project in this report as the most significant of our undertakings of this first year of the new century.

On October 28, 1901 carefully phrased circulars were mailed to libraries from coast to coast. These announced the sale of printed cards, explained the method and details of subscription, and gave approximate costs (exact costs of course to depend on the reception and response of purchasers). Typical sample-cards accompanied each circular, in order that people at a distance or librarians unfamiliar with Library of Congress cataloging practices might be fully informed of the service now available to them.

The other outstanding achievement of the year was an extension not of the bibliographical apparatus of the Library's collections but an extension of the collections themselves. A deficiency appropriations act approved March 3, 1901, (31 Statutes at Large, 1039) contained this seemingly irrelevant provision:

That facilities for study and research in the Government Departments, the Library of Congress, the National Museum, the Zoological Park, the Bureau of Ethnology, the Fish Commission, the Botanic Gardens, and similar institutions hereafter established shall be afforded to scientific investigators and to duly qualified individuals, students and graduates of institutions of learning in the several States and Territories, as well as in the District of Columbia, under such rules and restrictions as the heads of the Departments and Bureaus may prescribe.

As a consequence it had become possible for the Library of Congress to undertake a service which Mr. Young had so reluctantly felt obliged to decline only a few years before, for now there was general authority to inaugurate a system of inter-library loans, resting on the theory of a special service to scholarship not within the power or the duty of a local library itself to render. Its purpose would be to aid research calculated to advance the boundaries of knowledge by the loan of unusual books not readily accessible elsewhere. Subject to certain conditions, nec-



essarily imposed by a due regard for the convenience of Congress, the Library of Congress would welcome applications from other libraries which might be submitted in behalf of serious investigators in their communities, the applicant library holding itself responsible to the Library of Congress for the proper use and custody of all materials loaned to it.

It began modestly enough and without announcement in fiscal 1901 with the loan of three volumes: one to the Ohio State University at Columbus, one to the Public Library of Rahway, New Jersey, and one to an individual, C. S. Peirce, of Milford, Pennsylvania. It was to become one of the outstanding features of the Library's national service.

Midway in the next fiscal year a highly important symposium appeared in *The Library Journal* for December 1901, entitled *The National Library: Its Work and Functions*. It consisted of brief comments from a number of prominent librarians examining Library of Congress operations, referring to its recent growth, and speculating upon its probable future. More significant than the librarians' remarks, however, were the two quotations that headed the article, for they revealed official attitudes prompted by the Library's recent activities. The first quotation was taken from President Theodore Roosevelt's annual message to Congress delivered December 3, 1901:

Perhaps the most characteristic educational movement of the past 50 years is that which has created the modern public library and developed it into broad and active service. There are now over 5,000 public libraries in the United States, the product of this period. In addition to accumulating material, they are also striving by organization, by improvement in method, and by co-operation, to give greater efficiency to the material they hold, to make it more widely useful, and by avoidance of unnecessary duplication in process to reduce the cost of its administration.

In these efforts they naturally look for assistance to the federal library, which, though still the

Library of Congress, and so entitled, is the one National Library of the United States. . . . It is housed in a building which is the largest and most magnificent yet erected for library uses. Resources are now being provided which will develop the collection properly, equip it with the apparatus and service necessary to its effective use, render its bibliographic work widely available, and enable it to become, not merely a center of research, but the chief factor in great co-operative efforts for the diffusion of knowledge and the advancement of learning.

These were heartening words. Mr. Roosevelt's annual message that year was long. It touched upon the usual concerns of Congress—foreign and domestic affairs, commerce, industry, and so on—yet it did not neglect education and the rôle of libraries in it. The identification of the Library of Congress with the leadership of these institutions and the national character of its influence were to be taken seriously.

The second heading to the symposium was a quotation from an address given by Herbert Putnam to the American Library Association assembled in convention at Waukesha, Wisconsin (during the week July 4-10, 1901). His words reflected ideas which were in many minds, but never so carefully expressed.

If there is any way in which our National Library may "reach out" from Washington it should reach out. Its first duty is, no doubt, as a legislative library, to Congress. Its next is as a federal library to aid the executive and judicial departments of the government and the scientific undertakings under government auspices. Its next is to that general research which may be carried on at Washington by resident and visiting students and scholars. . . . But this should not be the limit. There should be possible also a service to the country at large: a service to be extended through the libraries which are the local centers of research involving the use of books.

It was this year, also, that interlibrary loans received further stimulus, not only within the Library itself but through declarations to the library profession and the academic world as well. In develop-

ing the concept of this service, the Librarian was obliged carefully to feel his way. Thus in his American Library Association address he raised the question:

But how about the books themselves? Must the use of this great collection be limited to Washington? How many of the students who need some book in the Library of Congress—perhaps there alone—can come to Washington to consult it at the moment of need? A case is conceivable: a university professor at Madison or Berkeley or San Antonio, in connection with research important to scholarship, requires some volume in an unusual set. The set is not in the university library. It is too costly for that library to acquire for the infrequent need. The volume is in the National Library. It is not at the moment in use in Washington. The university library requests the loan of it. If the National Library is to be the national library—?

There might result some inconvenience. There would be also the peril of transit. Some volumes might be lost to posterity. But after all we are ourselves a posterity. Some respect is due to the ancestors who have saved for *our* use. And if one copy of a book possessed by the federal government and within reasonable limits subject to call by different institutions, might suffice for the entire United States—what does logic seem to require—and expediency—and the good of the greater number?

The Library of Congress is now primarily a reference library. But if there be any citizen who thinks that it should never lend a book—to another library—in aid of the higher research—when the book can be spared from Washington and is not a book within the proper duty of the local library to supply—if there be any citizen who thinks that for the National Library to lend under these circumstances would be a misuse of its resources and, therefore, an abuse of trust—he had better speak quickly, or he may be too late. Precedents may be created which it would be awkward to ignore.

This address was appropriately entitled *What May Be Done For Libraries By The Nation*.

Only two further remarks are necessary. Interlibrary loan was a *fait accompli* when the Librarian spoke to the American Historical Association in Washington on December 28, 1901. Addressing the historians on *The Relation of the National*

*Library to Historical Research in the United States* he gave the formal assurance:

If the book is in the National Library, if it is a book which it is not the duty of the local library to supply; if it is not at the moment needed in Washington, and if it is transportable: it may, very probably, upon application, be lent to the local library for his use. A system of inter-library loan may thus enable the unusual book at Washington to render a service in any part of the United States.

There were, of course, reasonable qualifications. It was explained that the Library of Congress was "a library of record," that general circulation did not fall within its scope, that there was an admitted danger of loss or damage. On the other hand, the need of scholars was paramount, and "such cases will occur, and under suitable conditions will doubtless be recognized by the Library."

Within a year William Howard Brett, librarian of the Cleveland Public Library, would write: "The Library of Congress has . . . adopted the plan of loaning books to other libraries, and is practically placing its valuable collection at the service of the student and investigator in any part of the country." It may be noted that during fiscal 1902 the number of volumes issued on interlibrary loan totaled 110.

Paralleling the establishment of inter-library loan this year was the continuing but still new practice of printed card distribution. It had been in operation for a year and showed: 212 libraries currently subscribing; cash sales amounting to \$3,785.19; cash deposits of \$6,451.53. It was still in its beginnings, however, and the library public evidently needed more information with respect to its background and objectives. On this point, Mr. Putnam wrote: "The full significance of the distribution of cards by the National Library can be appreciated only after consideration of the various proposals and projects for cooperative cataloging which have been put forth in years past. A



bibliography of these, with explanatory notes, has been compiled by Mr. Torstein Jahr (of the Library of Congress) and Mr. Adam Strohm, now librarian of the Public Library of Trenton, N. J. It is so suggestive of the place which the project of the Library of Congress is to take in such cooperation that I offer it in full as an Appendix to this report." And a formidable bibliography it was, occupying nearly one hundred pages and containing 366 entries (from 1850 to 1902).

Closely related to the sale of printed cards, in fact an integral part of its bibliographical program, was the plan to deposit complete sets in various research centers throughout the country, in order to attain four principal objectives:

1. To enable students and investigators to ascertain whether certain works are in the Library of Congress without making a trip to Washington or submitting lists of books.
2. To promote bibliographical work.
3. To promote uniformity and accuracy in cataloguing.
4. To enable the depository library and other libraries in its vicinity to order cards for their catalogues with the minimum expenditure of labor by submitting lists of serial numbers taken from the depository cards.

It was planned at that time (1902) to select 25 institutions to receive full sets. Of these 21 were then announced:

Brooklyn Public Library.  
Carnegie Library of Atlanta, Ga  
Cincinnati Public Library  
Cleveland Public Library.  
Denver Public Library.  
Fiske Free and Public Library, New Orleans.  
Illinois State University Library.  
John Crerar Library, Chicago.  
Johns Hopkins University Library.  
McGill University Library, Montreal.  
Massachusetts State Library.  
Mechanics Institute Library, San Francisco.  
Minnesota University Library.  
Nebraska University Library.  
New York Public Library.  
New York State Library, Albany.  
Pennsylvania University Library

Philadelphia Free Library.  
St. Louis Public Library.  
Texas University Library.  
Wisconsin State Historical Library, Madison.

The practice, moreover, had commended itself to librarians across the sea. Guido Biagi, librarian of the Laurentian Library at Florence, had contributed to the April issue of the *Revista delle Biblioteche*, an article on the card distribution service of the Library of Congress, in which he had not only paid tribute to its high importance, but, in addition, had urged his colleagues and the Italian Ministry of Public Instruction to consider its adaptability to an international bibliographical service.

Already Mr. Putnam had accomplished, or was on the way to accomplishing, many of the first ambitions of his administration. A system of classification, at once mnemonic and expansive, was being developed, 81,275 volumes and pamphlets were being reclassified a year in accordance with it, more than 65,000 volumes were being cataloged in accordance with the highest standards yet devised, nearly 400,000 cards were being added to the three catalogs, the once-untrained staff was "in a high degree expert," accessions were arriving at a satisfactory rate, and the Library was establishing its reference services on a high plane through the addition of a group of experts, who would not only immeasurably assist the public in the location of appropriate materials but would also assist the Librarian in the development of an effective acquisitions program. Then, in the winter of 1903, the Congress passed, and the President signed, a law which still further emphasized the national character of the Library. This act of February 23, contained the following provision:

The head of any Executive Department or bureau or any commission of the Government is hereby authorized from time to time to turn over to the Librarian of Congress, for the use of the Library of Congress, any books, maps or other material in

the Library of the Department, bureau, or commission no longer needed for its use, and in the judgment of the Librarian of Congress appropriate to the uses of the Library of Congress.

Within two weeks came the first directive in the form of an executive order. Dated March 9, 1903, it read:

The historical archives in the Department of State known as the Revolutionary archives, and comprising (1) the records and papers of the Continental Congress; (2) the papers of George Washington; (3) the papers of James Madison; (4) the papers of Thomas Jefferson; (5) the papers of Alexander Hamilton; (6) the papers of James Monroe; (7) the papers of Benjamin Franklin, are by authority provided by the act of Congress entitled "An act making appropriations for the legislative, executive, and judicial expenses of the Government for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1904 . . ." approved February 25, 1903, hereby ordered to be transferred from the Department of State—with such exceptions and reservations in each collection herein enumerated as in the discretion of the Secretary of State may be required for the continuity and completeness of the records and archives of the Department of State—to the possession and custody of the Library of Congress, to be there preserved and rendered accessible for the historical and other legitimate uses under such rules and regulations as may from time to time be prescribed by the Librarian of Congress.

The transfer here directed shall be made on the 1st day of July, 1903, or as promptly thereafter as shall be found conveniently practicable to the Department of State and the Library of Congress.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

This made the Library the custodian of, and the Librarian responsible for, historical source materials of incalculable importance, and brought from Mr. Putnam a succinct appraisal of the Library's increasing stature:

The progress of the Library which is more significant [than statistics] can not be expressed in figures. It consists in the gradual perfection of its equipment and of its service in a development of its collections appropriate to its purpose as a library for research, and in a wider appreciation and acceptance of its functions as a national library, with a duty to the entire country.

It was always Mr. Putnam's practice to consolidate the gains, to go forward only when there was preparation for the advance, and when there was reasonable assurance of a successful issue. As early as 1904, however, the Library of Congress had come to possess a position unique among the great libraries of the world, and Mr. Putnam could remark with a touch of confidence in the progress already attained:

If the reports of our own National Library be more extensive [than those of the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale] it will be due not to an attempt to describe what other research libraries deem incapable of description, but to the relation of certain activities which it is pursuing of which their operations afford no example.

It was in that year, also, that the Library's Music Division had served 11,776 volumes and pieces of music to 3,459 readers, whereas, in the similar period, the internationally renowned Musik Bibliothek Peters, at Leipzig maintained by the publishing house of C. F. Peters, while responding to six hundred more readers had actually issued a thousand fewer items. Here was sound evidence of recovery from the confusion which had existed in the collections of one administrative unit a surprisingly short time before.

Financially, the resources of the Library had been increased. The total appropriation, exclusive of printing and binding was \$588,084.33, and funds available for the purchase of additions to the collections had risen to \$99,800. The staff had grown to 303; there were 235 distributed through the "Library proper" and 68 were assigned to the Copyright Office. But because of the surprisingly low salaries, surprisingly low even for that time, it was difficult to retain the services of highly trained personnel, even in key positions. Thomas H. Clark, Law Librarian, left the Library to



return to a more remunerative practice of law; William P. Cutter, Chief of the Order Division, withdrew to become librarian of the Forbes Library at Northampton, Massachusetts; Roland P. Falkner, Chief of the Documents Division, went out to Puerto Rico as Commissioner of Education; Theodore Wesley Koch, expert in bibliography, accepted appointment as associate librarian of the University of Michigan; Robert K. Shaw, of the Catalog Division resigned to become librarian of the Public Library at Brockton, Massachusetts; Claude B. Guittard, of the Order Division, departed to become librarian of the Coast and Geodetic Survey; Clarence W. Perley returned to Chicago as chief classifier of the John Crerar Library; and Hester Coddington was given the position of head cataloger at the University of Wisconsin.

To Mr. Putnam as administrator, seeking to organize a staff outstanding for experience and training and professional initiative, these separations must have involved concern, discouragement, and even dismay; but to Mr. Putnam as the head of the library system of the United States, they were accepted as an important contribution of his Library to the service of the Nation. This, indeed, was his comment:

The departure from our service of many skilled and experienced workers in subordinate positions is a serious loss not readily to be made good. Yet it represents a tendency to which we must submit, in which, indeed, we should take a certain satisfaction. For it implies that the National Library may become a training school, at least a school of useful experience for library workers in advanced fields. It implies that association with its great collections, its extensive bibliographic apparatus, its (in intention at least) scholarly methods, its corps of trained scientific experts, its unique and varied activities, and its varied and exacting constituency, is assumed to qualify for the conduct of responsible work elsewhere. The prestige which this association confers is one of the inducements that it offers to its

service. We cannot complain if it operate to deprive us from time to time of an efficient employee, for the opportunity for a more independent or more remunerative position elsewhere, to which this prestige may lead, was itself the essence of the inducement.

The supply of trained workers to other libraries opens now an interesting, if unpremeditated, possible service of the National Library to the country at large. The Library could not take the place of the library schools; it cannot undertake to teach the "elements", it can give no useful experience in the operations and methods of a library of the popular type; it has no department for younger readers. The experience which it offers can be fully useful only to a student who has had a broad and thorough general education, and promptly useful only to one who has added to this, training in a professional library school.

But to those well equipped in these preliminaries a few years at the National Library can now, I believe, be regarded as an experience of high stimulus and utility for that advanced service which will increasingly be demanded in those of our libraries serving the investigator, and which will not be superfluous in any of them.

To the satisfaction which it must feel in affording such an opportunity, with the resultant gain to other libraries, the National Library will add another: That each trained worker who goes out from its service will take with him a knowledge of its methods and its aims. It does not propose its methods as a model for other libraries; but its aims are to serve them, and a knowledge of its methods—as of its collections and organization—is necessary on the part of the correspondent library which is to utilize fully the service that it desires to render. It will thus hope to regard each graduated worker as in a sense an outpost and continuing associate in a work which is not confined to Washington, but which seeks to be understood and utilized throughout the country at large.

In yet another direction it had become necessary to arrive at a philosophic basis from which to form the Library's policy. This was the matter of publications. As a consequence of the operations of the act of 1903, the Library had become the possessor of distinguished collections of Papers. Not all, to be sure, had come as transfers; descendants of many notable Americans had presented correspondence of their

ancestors; other important records had been acquired by purchase; but the result had been the rapid accumulation of documents of primary significance to the investigator of American origins. They would, of course, be made available to students resorting to the Library, but there was, perhaps, a further obligation. Mr. Putnam posed some rhetorical questions:

How far should the National Library go beyond this? Shall it undertake publication of the texts themselves? or leave this to private enterprise? or preserve absolute monopoly of the sources by even refusing publication at private expense?

. . . The objection that publication diminishes the prestige of possession of the original is not deemed respectable for an institution whose motive is unselfish promotion of research; nor is the objection that distribution of the text in printed form tends to diminish recourse to the original, deemed worthy of an institution which measures its benefits not by the number of readers whom it may tally upon its premises, but by the substantial general service to the cause of learning.

. . . There are three strong arguments in favor of publication:

1. Publication would save excessive wear and tear upon the originals;
2. Publication would enable the texts to be studied by investigators who can not come to Washington;
3. Publication would enable that thorough, detailed, and continuing, as well as general, study of them which their nature and their bulk requires if they are to promote a proper understanding and representation of American history.

To publication through commercial or private enterprise there were obvious objections. Simply stated, this would involve issue for profit and hence be subject almost inevitably to exploitation. The records might be only partially reproduced. There would be a risk of small editions at high prices, with the unfortunate result of a limited distribution. The Government, custodian of the sources, might lose control of form and editorial

arrangement. Mr. Putnam was satisfied of his obligation and announced that the Library would initiate the publication of texts, with the Journals of the Continental Congress. The first volume appeared in the course of the following year.

But the Library's publication program was not limited to the publication of historical source materials. It had other duties to the American community; and particularly it had duties to others wherever opportunities for cooperation might reside. In 1893-94, the United States Bureau of Education and the American Library Association had joined in the publication of an *A. L. A. List of 5,000 Best Books for a Model Library*. This had served a useful purpose and a new and revised edition had become a *desideratum*. Therefore Mr. Putnam announced in 1904:

The Library of Congress is now the national head of the library system of the country, and maintains with American libraries a relation of counsel and active service. It seems now the appropriate agency of the Government to promote the publication of this new edition. . . . It has accordingly agreed to publish it, and before submission of this report will have issued it.

When it appeared, it bore the title: *A. L. A. Catalog, 8,000 Volumes for a Popular Library, With Notes*. Two years later the Library of Congress would participate in another cooperative undertaking by publishing the *A. L. A. Portrait Index. Index to Portraits Contained in Printed Books and Periodicals*. In these ways the Library was lending the resources of its collections, personnel, purse and purpose to enlarge the service of smaller institutions, removed from the great centers of research.

At the conference of the American Library Association, held at Portland, Oregon, in the summer of 1905, Mr. Putnam again presented his views of the rôle of the Library of Congress in its relation to the Nation. There, in the course of an ad-



dress entitled *The Library of Congress as a National Library*, he said:

The term [in the title] is "national," not "federal." The Library of Congress is a federal library and will continue to be, whatever the general service that it may perform. . . .

As a federal library it must render a service to the federal government. It was established to serve but one department of the government, the legislative. It has come to serve all three—legislative, executive, and judicial. . . . [It] must exist for the convenience of Congress, and its law division for the convenience of the supreme court and its bar; it must aid the executive departments . . . and it is a laboratory for the scientific bureaus, except so far as their needs are supplied by the working libraries which they themselves maintain. . . .

The general theory of our national functions is that the nation—that is, the federal government—shall undertake only those services which cannot be performed, or can but imperfectly, or at excessive cost, be performed by the local authorities . . .

Taking, therefore, the state and municipal libraries in the aggregate, and making due allowance for academic and for endowed libraries for research in particular fields, there seems room in this country for one library that shall be (1) a library for special service to the federal government; (2) a library of record for the United States; (3) a library of research, reinforcing and supplementing other research libraries; (4) a library for national service—that is, a library which shall respond to a demand from any part of the country, and thus equalize opportunities for research now very unequally distributed.

Now, a library to perform these quadripartite functions must possess three advantages: first, a suitable building, and the Library of Congress possessed such an one; second, large and diverse collections, books, manuscripts, maps, music, prints, and the Library of Congress was rapidly amassing them, indeed it was "now impossible for any work in any period of American history to be definitive without recourse to Washington;" third, an organized group of catalogers, classifiers and interpreters. In that respect the Library's staff was small but carefully chosen, and

was striving toward the highest level of specialized standards.

The conclusion was becoming apparent, but the Librarian had more to say about the Library's work. It was already lending books throughout the Nation, to Maine, to Texas, to California; only to other libraries, it was true, but to these libraries for the benefit of individuals everywhere who had a claim upon the country's resources. Should a book be lost in the process (and here he must have shrugged in the saying): "I know of but one answer: that a book used is, after all, fulfilling a higher mission than a book which is merely being preserved for possible future use." And he went on:

The single great bibliographic contribution of the British Museum is its catalog in book form. The notable contribution of the Library of Congress is its catalog on cards. . . . We have not sought to press . . . [their sale] for three reasons: (1) Because the distribution involves to the Library of Congress an expense and some inconvenience not at all reimbursed by the subscriptions received; and (2) because the cards at present cover but a fraction of the existing collection, and (3) because our methods and rules of entry are still undergoing revision, and we did not covet the task of explaining changes or of satisfying subscribers as to inconsistencies.

. . . there is now service by correspondence; for the library answers every appeal for bibliographic information that comes to it from anywhere . . . and they come from all parts of the United States, and are upon subjects most diverse.

Lastly, if there is a matter of international concern upon which international cooperation should be sought, cooperation between institutions as distinguished from associations, it is the national library of our country which would represent the community of libraries in the exchange of view and of effort.

Surely the prophecies of 1899 were coming true: "the opportunity and the man together" were making "the headship of the library profession in this country."

Another important incident in the chronicle of 1905, was the beginning of a plan

to obtain transcripts from foreign archives of documents pertaining to the history of the United States during the colonial period. In that year the Library acquired the Stevens *Catalogue Index of Manuscripts in the Archives of England, France, Holland, and Spain relating to America, 1763-1783*, which was then, as the compiler, Benjamin Franklin Stevens, truly described it, "the sole key to the American Revolutionary documents in European Archives." At the same time the Library acquired the transcripts which had been made under Mr. Stevens' direction, from the archives of England and France, of documents relating to the Peace of 1783, between the United States and Great Britain. Thus was formally begun an enterprise which had been the hope of historical scholars from the time when first our national history had been an object of investigation. With the affirmative cooperation of the Bureau of Historical Research of the Carnegie Institution and the Council of the American Historical Association, it was determined further to secure transcripts of documents in accordance with a long-range plan. The first to be so copied were selected from archives in the British Museum and the Bodleian Library at Oxford by Charles M. Andrews, then of Bryn Mawr, who for some years had made a special study of American records in English repositories.

Within ten years the transcripts from British archives would number about 175,000 folios, there would be similar undertakings (always on a selective basis) in France and Spain, and gradually in other parts of Europe and America, until in 1927, they would have grown to 300,000 folios, and John D. Rockefeller, Jr., would give \$450,000 to provide a large-scale operation.

It was at about this time that H. G. Wells published a book entitled *The Future in America: A Search After Realities*,

in which he recounted his experiences during a recent visit to the United States. This contained an observation which has a relation to this study. He was in Washington and—

I went through the splendid Botanical Gardens, through the spacious and beautiful Capitol, and so to the magnificently equipped Library of Congress. There in an upper chamber that commands an altogether beautiful view of long vistas of avenue and garden to that stupendous unmeaning obelisk (the work of the women of America) that dominates all Washington, I found at last a little group of men who could talk. It was like a small raft upon a limitless empty sea. I lunched with them at their Round Table, and afterwards Mr. Putnam showed me the Rotunda, quite the most gracious reading-room dome the world possesses, and explained the wonderful mechanical organization that brings almost every volume in that immense collection within a minute of one's hand. "With all this," I asked him, "why doesn't the place *think*?" He seemed discreetly to consider it did.

The discretion of course was habitual, but the reference to the Round Table is of interest for the reason that it recalls an institution that came as close as anything did come in those days, to staff participation in the Library's affairs. For many years it was Mr. Putnam's custom to have luncheon every day in a private dining room adjoining the public dining room on the Library's topmost story. There he would preside over a group comprised of particularly congenial subordinate officers of the Library and certain eminent scholars and public figures resident in Washington who invariably were honored by inclusion. The guest-list was eventually to include most of the personages of prominence in national affairs. In a strict sense, however, the Librarian's Round Table was Mr. Putnam's Round Table, and though, occasionally, it did afford an opportunity to discuss common problems it was less an institutional than a personal organization.

When, in 1901, Mr. Putnam had reported on the "present collections," he had



pointed out that the Library possessed only 569 Russian books. Actually, of course, the Library had but very few of the original authorities and was weak "in modern descriptive works." Even "on the history of Russia and on the Crimean war" there was only a handful of substantial works. This had inspired in Mr. Putnam a wish to correct a situation which so impaired the universality of the Library's resources. In 1904, he had received a letter from a Russian gentleman, living at Krasnoiarsk, near Lake Baikal, in the heart of Siberia, which seemed to suggest a solution:

If I had sufficient financial means at my disposal and my affairs were in their former flourishing condition, I would in my declining years give my books, after a Russian custom, to one of our public institutions or present them to the Library of Congress with the sole idea of establishing closer relations between the two nations. It is to be regretted that I cannot do so in spite of all my wishes.

The writer was Gennadius Vasilievich Yudin, and by way of reply Mr. Putnam had prepared a proposal and had entrusted it in 1906 to Alexis V. Babine, the Library's specialist in Slavic literature, for delivery to Mr. Yudin. On "August 10/23, 1906," Mr. Yudin had written Mr. Putnam:

This letter and your telegram of yesterday to Babine give me the hope of a possible realization of our mutual desire to make it possible for my library to be accessible to the world of science. I do not know a more honored place for it than the American National Library, and on my part shall do everything to see it there.

And thus it came about that in his Annual Report for fiscal 1907, Mr. Putnam could announce:

The most important accession to the Library (the private library of Mr. Gennadius Vasilievich Yudin, of Krasnoiarsk, Siberia) ranks legally as a purchase, since a sum was paid out in its acquisition. But as the sum paid scarcely exceeded a third of what the owner himself had expended in the accumulation of it over a period

of thirty years, and as his chief inducement to part with it was the desire to have it render a useful public service in our National Library, I prefer to record it as primarily a gift, and it has thus been described to the public. Its importance would be obvious from its dimensions alone, for it comprises over 80,000 volumes—all relating to Russia and Siberia, and all save about 12,000 in the Russian language. So ample a collection, so well balanced, in this particular field may not exist outside of Russia.

The collection, which a young exile named Lenin once had used, represented the result of a systematic accumulation, over a long period, by a competent bibliographer, with ample funds, and a devoted interest in Russian bibliography, history and literature. Not merely did it omit no important work of the Russian historians from Tatishchev and Karamzin to Pogodin, Soloviev, Kostomarov, and Kluchevskii, but it included among its "source material" complete sets of the Russian Annals, the publications of historical and archaeological societies and the provincial commissions whose object is to collect and publish documents relating to the national history. In pure literature the collection of texts included the best edition of every important Russian writer. Even the fine arts were fairly represented. There were, in addition, certain manuscript records of the early Russian settlements in Alaska, which, "if not calculated to alter any fact or inference of history," had "in themselves a curious and sentimental interest."

The question of transportation to Washington was a serious one. More than five hundred packing cases were required, and these had to be made to order. The route selected was via European Russia and Germany to Hamburg. Three months were occupied with the manufacture of cases and the packing. The shipment started on February 6, and on April 6 the entire collection was safely stored in the basement of the Library building. Said Mr. Putnam: "No such expedition would

have been possible without the cooperation of the Russian authorities, who, at the appeal of our Embassy, cleared the railway lines, and directed that this shipment should be given the right-of-way."

When, in that same year Dr. Kan-Ichi Asakawa, of the Yale faculty went to Japan to gather "a collection of Japanese books which would be useful in the Library of the University," he was asked by Mr. Putnam to combine with this mission "the further task of gathering a collection suited to the wider uses of the National Library," and the Librarian could soon report that "the result has reached us in some 9,000 works carefully selected by an acknowledged expert." While the world grew smaller, the Library was obliged to grow.

For reference use, the Library was, of course, "absolutely free, without introduction or credential, to any inquirer from any place," but there was sometimes a misapprehension concerning its lending practices. It was in response to a question of this nature that Mr. Putnam, on December 8, 1906, wrote to the Honorable H. H. Bingham, chairman of the Subcommittee on the Legislative Appropriation Bill:

You have asked the present rules of the Library as to issue of books for use outside of the Library building:

The Library of Congress is not a "lending" or circulating library in the ordinary sense—in the sense in which the Public Library of the District is a lending library. It is primarily a "reference library." Its efficiency as such requires that when a Member of Congress or other investigator comes to consult it he shall find its collections substantially *intact*, which he would not do if various books were liable to be out at the homes of readers. It is a *research library*, and all the great research libraries of the world are either exclusively reference libraries or circulate within narrow limits. All *national* libraries are such for the additional reason that they have a duty to preserve for the future—a complete exhibit of their country's press.

But the Library of Congress *does* lend:

(1) To the classes designated by statute *any book* whatever. . . .

(2) To any person in the Government service *any book required by that service*. And this is interpreted very broadly.

(3) To members of the Press Galleries and to the office of any newspaper, newspaper correspondent, or periodical in Washington.

(4) *To any person engaged in a serious investigation calculated to advance the boundaries of knowledge* any book not by common usage of libraries a mere reference book, and not at the moment in use by Congress or in the Government service or by a reference reader.

Such loans do not extend to the mere general reader or ordinary student. They are for persons engaged in *research*. These persons may be in Washington or *anywhere*. If outside of Washington, they make application through the public or other chief library of the place where they reside, and the books are issued by us *to that library* for their use. This is under the system of inter-library loan. (Expressage or postage is of course paid by the borrower.)

He might have added that as long before as 1897, "books of a technical character and for official purposes," had been, by courtesy, "loaned to bureaus like those of the Bureau of Education, Geological and Coast Surveys;" that there had been a rule adopted in 1815, by which the Librarian could lend books to any person not a Member of Congress upon deposit of the value thereof, such deposit to be returned upon the return of the book or books; and that because this had been found to be in conflict with the Revised Statutes, the practice had been discontinued in 1895. Finally, he might have mentioned the fact that the establishment of a Free Public Library in the District of Columbia had relieved the Library of Congress from engaging in the circulating "business" which once had been considered by Mr. Young.

Ainsworth Rand Spofford died on August 11, 1908. Naturally, therefore, Mr. Putnam's Report, submitted the following



winter, could "not omit immediate mention of an event of sad significance:"

His title, during the last eleven years, that of Chief Assistant Librarian, did not obscure his greater office, that of Librarian Emeritus, nor the distinction to the Library or the honor to himself of the service which for thirty-two years he had rendered as its Librarian in chief. His most enduring service—the increase of its collections—continued to the last few weeks of his life, and continued with the enthusiasm, the devotion, the simple, patient, and arduous concentration that had always distinguished it. The history of it during its most influential period will be the history of the Library from 1861 to 1897. This will in due course, and proper amplitude, appear.

To his place Mr. Putnam promoted Appleton Prentiss Clark Griffin, formerly an Assistant Librarian in the Reading Room, and Chief Bibliographer, since the creation of that office in 1900.

The Library had reached a point of comparative stability, a point at which Mr. Putnam might, like another great engineer, stick his head out the window and "watch the drivers roll." The opportunities of the Library for distribution, were enhanced by a provision in the appropriation act for 1909–10:

The Librarian of Congress may from time to time transfer to other governmental libraries within the District of Columbia, including the Public Library, books and material in the possession of the Library of Congress in his judgment no longer necessary to its uses, but in the judgment of the custodians of such other collections likely to be useful to them, and may dispose of or destroy such material as has become useless.

Moreover, the knowledge of the Library was spreading rapidly among our own students and investigators, who evidenced it by their increasing use of the facilities offered, and notably abroad in those countries given to the study of library administration, and active in the establishment or improvement of libraries. His Excellency T'ang Shao-Yi, Ambassador on Special Mission from the Chinese Government, had presented a complete

set in 5,041 volumes of the great encyclopedia, the *Tu Shu Tsi Cheng*, where a copy for "our own National Library" had "been for some time past one of our chief desires." But because the work was not "in any way upon the market," and "because the copies in the possession of the Chinese Government" were "almost exhausted, we had feared that this desire could not be satisfied." In a treatise on *Bibliothèques* by M. Eugène Morel, published at Paris in 1909, the Library had been characterized as a "Department" (Ministère) with four principal functions:

Nous signalons seulement ces points sur lesquels nous aurons tant à revenir. Ils suffisent à nous faire concevoir leur Bibliothèque nationale non comme un musée, ou une bibliothèque de quartier, ou une bibliothèque spéciale historique, conceptions diverses que les journalistes et historiens se font de la nôtre, mais comme un *ministère* où sous une direction unique sont groupés tous les services concernant la propriété artistique et littéraire, les bibliothèques, les livres, l'établissement enfin et la diffusion d'une bibliographie générale.

The Library, having established itself as a force in the social, intellectual and cultural life of the United States was beginning to exert an international influence.

The rapid growth of the Library's manuscript collections had, by 1911, imposed the necessity of defining their scope. It was asked to inspect the records of the American military occupation of Cuba from 1898 to 1902; but "an offer to transfer these records to the Library it could not receive favorably." The future historical value of such records was undoubted, and most certainly they should be preserved; but, in the opinion of Mr. Putnam and his associate Gaillard Hunt, "the Library can not sacrifice its space to the storage of public papers which properly belong to other Government offices." They believed that "such papers should go to a national archives depository," and it was "gratifying to see that a serious movement"

was "on foot to erect a building for this purpose."

But in the annals of the Library for 1911, the most important event was the discussion of a projected service to Congress "even more specific." It had been marked by the introduction of several bills in the second session of the Sixty-first Congress looking to the creation of a legislative reference and bill drafting bureau, and these bills induced Mr. Putnam to present a special report, printed as a Senate Document, outlining the functions of such an organization, indicating certain distinctions, and concluding with general recommendations. Mr. Putnam at the time made it clear that some "of the propositions presented" seemed "to have overlooked the fact that the Library of Congress" had, "for many years, performed many of the functions usual in legislative reference bureaus." It had, for example, taken "the lead in preparing bibliographic lists on public questions." As long ago as 1900, when the subject of newly acquired territories had been under consideration by Congress, it had prepared a list of books on the theory of colonization. Since the issue of that compilation, it had published "at opportune times" select lists on questions of legislation pending in Congress. Through its Division of Bibliography assistance had been rendered to Members of Congress in matters under their consideration, perhaps with regard to a bill, or with regard to a committee report, or with regard to speeches that were to be made, "or in other respects." Calls for information, or for references, had been made personally, or had come by letter, by telephone, or by telegraph. Sometimes they had come when a Member was speaking on the floor, or when a committee was in session. While the Library had not undertaken to write speeches or prepare briefs, it had in par-

ticular instances, furnished material which had been "incorporated in speeches." The Library's officers had been at all times ready to advise Senators and Representatives upon the best sources of information and otherwise to "render accessible the resources of the Library." The accumulation of material important to the legislator was, of course, one of the Library's regular "and primary functions:" the only step at which it had stopped short of a legislative reference bureau in this regard being that it had thus far contented itself with acquiring and preserving the material in its ordinary forms, "not undertaking to dissect it with reference to particular subjects."

Of the functions of a legislative reference bureau, Mr. Putnam gave precise details:

It undertakes not merely to classify and to catalogue, but to draw off from a general collection the literature—that is, the data—bearing upon a particular legislative project. It indexes, extracts, compiles. It acquires extra copies of society publications and periodicals and breaks these up for the sake of the articles pertinent to a particular subject. It clips from newspapers: and it classifies the extracts, the compilations, the articles, and the clippings in a scrapbook, or portfolio, or vertical file, in such a way that all material relating to that topic is kept together and can be drawn forth at a moment's notice. To printed literature it often adds written memoranda as to fact and even opinion as to merit, which it secures by correspondence with experts.

The above work, which organizes and concentrates all the data pertinent to a question in such form as to be readily responsive, is beyond the abilities of the Library with its present organization. The Library would gladly undertake it; it could undertake it without additional appropriation for the material itself, so far as this is in printed form; but it would require for it an enlargement of its present Divisions of Law, Documents, and Bibliography, and in addition the creation of a new division under the title of a Legislative or Congressional Reference Division.

Mr. Putnam's report, with accompanying documents was printed in 55 pages of



small type, but his letter of transmittal concluded with these general observations:

The organization requisite to a congressional (legislative) reference bureau will therefore depend upon the functions proposed for such a bureau, whether (1) merely the acquisition of the data, the organization of these to respond to the legislative need, and the aid to their use; or in addition to this, (2) the preparation of indexes, digests, and compilations of law not having directly such ends in view; or in addition to both the above, (3) the drafting and revision of bills.

In any case it must be emphasized—

1. That the organization must be elaborate beyond that provided by any State, since the subjects to be dealt with are far wider in scope, the material more remote, more complex, and more difficult, and the precedents less available.

2. That (the field being unique) the needs (in the way of organization) can be ascertained only by experiment. The first appropriation should be, therefore, a "lump sum."

3. That for the work to be scientific (i. e. having only truth as its object) it must be strictly nonpartisan; and that, therefore, whatever the appointing or administrative authority, the selection of the experts and the direction of the work should by law and in fact be assuredly nonpartisan.

Several years were to elapse before action would be taken. There would be proposals and alternative proposals. A series of bills would be introduced. It would be determined to separate the drafting service and the reference service. And then, in the appropriation for fiscal 1915 there would be an item:

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE. To enable the Librarian of Congress to employ competent persons to prepare such indexes, digests, and compilations of law as may be required for Congress and other official use pursuant to the Act approved June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and six, \$25,000.

But Mr. Putnam would say: "in the minds of many members of Congress, and to some extent in the expressed intention, the provision is, moreover, but the beginning of Legislative reference service in all of its phases save the actual drafting of bills." History would make valid the assumption.

Meanwhile other circumstances affected the story of the Library. Mrs. Gardiner Greene Hubbard died in 1909, leaving, as she had promised John Russell Young, a sum of \$20,000, to be set apart out of her real estate, stocks, bonds and other securities, to be held upon the following trust, viz: "to pay over during each year the net income therefrom to the Librarian of Congress, said income so paid over as above to be used exclusively for the purchase of engravings and etchings to be added to said 'Gardiner Greene Hubbard Collection.'"

Three years were to pass before the Government would find the means of fulfilling Mrs. Hubbard's wish and would accept with adequate guarantees, the \$20,000 still in the hands of her trustee. It would finally be accomplished by act of Congress, the terms of which are set forth herewith:

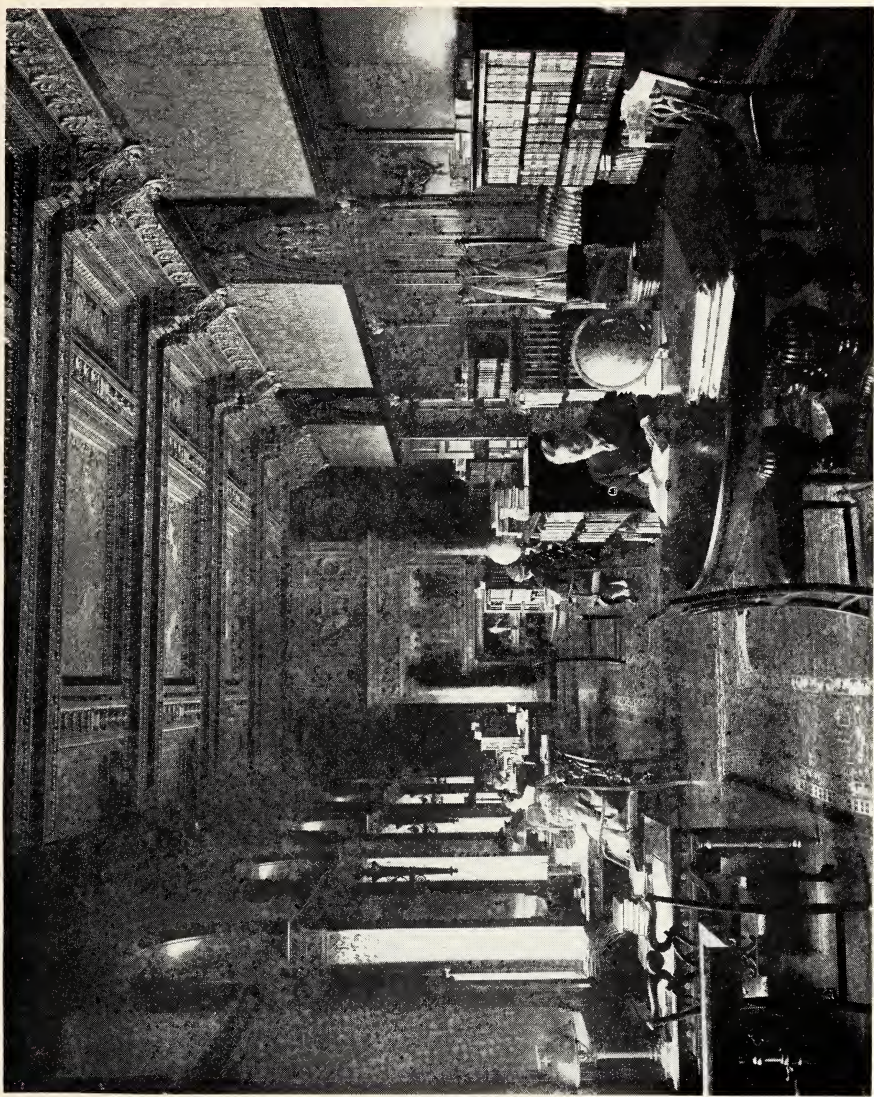
*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That the conditions of the bequest to the United States of America contained in the will of the late Gertrude M. Hubbard, and which are set forth in the following language, to wit:

[here follow the paragraphs from Mrs. Hubbard's will] be, and the same are hereby, agreed to and the bequest accepted.

SEC. 2. That the Treasurer of the United States be, and is hereby, authorized to receive from the American Security and Trust Company the principal of the above bequest, together with the interest, if any, accrued thereon, and to receipt for the same in the name of the United States of America, as accepted under the conditions and for the purpose defined in the said will, and, on behalf of the United States, to release said trust company from any liability in connection with said fund. And, further, the Librarian of Congress is authorized to join in said release, and thereby release said trust company from all future liability to the Librarian of Congress.

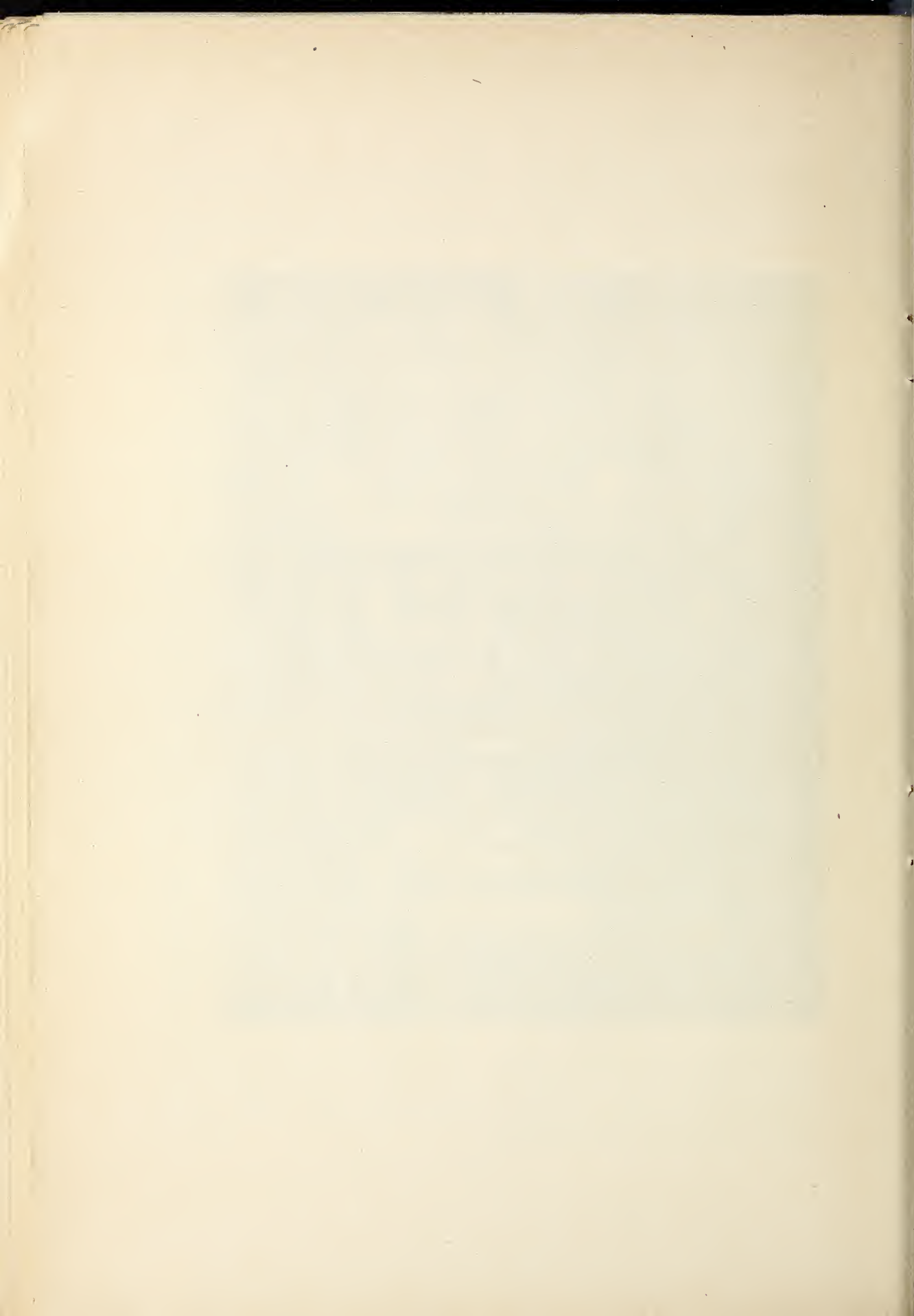
SEC. 3. That in compliance with said conditions the principal of the sum so received and paid into the Treasury of the United States shall be credited on the books of the Treasury Department as a perpetual trust fund; and the sum of eight hundred dollars, being equivalent to four per centum





*The Representatives Reading Room in the middle 1920's. Mr. Hugh Morrison, custodian, is seated in the foreground. David E. Roberts, then in charge of the Division of Prints, is in the background immediately in front of the fireplace.*





on the principal of said trust fund, be, and the same is hereby, appropriated, out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, and such appropriation shall be deemed a permanent annual appropriation and shall be expended in the manner and for the purposes herein authorized and as provided in said bequest.

Approved, August 20, 1912.

Here was a precedent which would one day lead to the establishment of the Library of Congress Trust Fund Board.

Just as the Library's techniques, its book-processes of cataloging and classification, its topical bibliographic reference lists, had carried its impact beyond the limits of the United States, so now did the work of its "special" or "scholarly" divisions gradually attain the world-wide recognition to which their collections and procedures entitled them. For example, C. Parry Jackson's *Maps: Their Value, Provision and Storage*, published in the English professional journal, *The Library Assistant*, in 1911, contained this tribute:

Another very important collection is that of the Library of Congress; it is indeed one of the largest—if not the largest—in the world, numbering, according to the Report of the Librarian . . . for 1909, over 106,000 sheets . . . It is not suggested that in any general libraries the necessity will arise for map accommodation of so elaborate a character as that provided by the Library of Congress, or by the Royal Geographic Society, but . . . useful hints as to the best methods of storage may be derived by observing the practice of these great institutions.

And a year later, with the appearance of such publications as the *List of Geographical Atlases* and the monumental *Catalogue of Orchestral Music*, the Library would make significant contributions to the learned community.

A suggestion of the place it had come to occupy in the minds of public spirited citizens was reflected in the following letter:

NEW YORK, November 19th, 1912.

HONORABLE WILLIAM H. TAFT

*The President of the United States*  
Washington, D. C.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: During the recent visit of Mr. Herbert Putnam, the Librarian of Congress, to my library, I learned with chagrin and regret that our National Library does not possess a complete set of letters or documents of the Signers to the Declaration of Independence.

As a citizen who appreciates the value and significance of such a collection, I herewith present to the United States of America, to be placed in the Library of Congress and administered therein by the authorities thereof, a complete bound set of letters and documents from the Signers to the Declaration of Independence, which, it seems to me, is more fittingly preserved in the National Library than in that of any individual.

With great respect, yours sincerely

J. PIERPONT MORGAN

When, in 1914, Mr. Putnam had completed fifteen years of service, he could state with some satisfaction: "The Library has now a status and prospect reasonably befitting its position as the National Library of the United States." There were in the collections more than two million volumes of printed works, and at least another million items in the form of manuscripts, maps, music and prints. The Library was obliged to be content "with the substance of many a work in a secondary," which was to say, a bibliographically inferior, form which it should possess in the original. Nevertheless the progress had been "substantial."

Again, in the organization of materials for use, in their classification and in their cataloging, there had been creditable success. "The major part of the material most in demand" was "now arranged by subject upon the shelves and . . . exhibited under the subject, as well as under the author, in catalogues modern and



scientific." Moreover the facilities "for access to it, for the prompt and convenient use of it, within the limitations usual to a library" were, "as a whole, for the investigator, superior to those of any other American library; the character and resources of the building and our ability to individualize his need" enabled "them to be so."

At the same time, "the development of a service to the non-resident investigator, and to other institutions serving him—service not merely in the loan of books, but in the supply of bibliographic information and of the by-products of our work in classification and cataloging," had gone forward. It might "be enlarged and diversified in due course as the opportunities" offered.

But there was one relation to which its duty was "intimate and immediate" as the Library of Congress:

How far has this, as a relation of service, improved with the general improvement of the past seventeen years? In many respects it has shared the benefit of the general improvement: for it gains (1) by the enlargement of the collections in whatever field of literature, (2) by the more systematic acquisition and treatment of material (documents serials, law, history, political and economic science) in the fields specially touched by legislation, and (3) by an organization competent to advise as to *sources* of information. The appeals to it, by Committees and by individual Senators and Representatives, for *lists* of the books and articles upon a given topic, now meet with a fair response. Such appeals are incessant; and during the sessions occupy largely the time of the Chief Assistant Librarian, and the Divisions of Law, Documents, and Bibliography, as well as the Reading Room Service. In meeting them the Library often reaches beyond the functions of a library to those of a Legislative Reference Bureau.

With its recent organization, however, it has not been able to meet such appeals sufficiently. The appeal is often not for books on a given subject, but for a *statement*. It may be a statement of the *facts*, it may be a statement of the *law*, it may be a statement (in the nature of a *précis*) of the *merits*. Now a statement of the *merits*, beyond a quotation of the authorities in argument, is not a safe func-

tion even for a legislative reference bureau; it is rather the province of an investigating commission. A statement of the *facts* which limits itself to a summary from available printed sources, with the authority duly identified, is within the usual province of such a bureau; and a statement of the *law* is its minimum and primary duty. For the legislator proposing to draft or to discuss a bill must have before him not merely the laws already enacted within the jurisdiction for which he is legislating, but as well the laws of other jurisdictions, domestic and foreign.

It was these considerations which Mr. Putnam would apply in the formation of the recently authorized Legislative Reference Service.

With the acquisition of the Yudin library, and annual increments made to it, the Library of Congress had come to possess the largest collection of Slavica outside of Russia. There was now to be an opportunity to increase the Library's resources in the field of Orientalia. Walter T. Swingle, of the Bureau of Plant Industry, "in the practical benefits of whose visit to the Far East in the spring and summer of 1915 on behalf of the Department of Agriculture we were permitted to share," had been for sometime "actively concerned in the development of our collections" and was "well acquainted with their contents." He took with him "a photographic catalogue of the oriental works in the libraries of Washington and Chicago," and "to his own impressions of oriental literature he brought the advice and counsel of native scholars in China and Japan." Commissioned to purchase for the Library of Congress he returned with 271 Chinese works in 13,061 chüan (books) bound in 4,945 volumes, 176 Japanese works bound in 770 volumes, 3 Korean works bound in 7 volumes; 2 sets of Chinese and 9 sets of Japanese periodicals (2,169 numbers) bound in 170 volumes; making a total of 5,892 volumes. This was the beginning of several similar expeditions, and was to go far toward laying the basis

for the largest library of Chinese books outside of China and Japan.

But however universal the scope of its foreign materials, and however important they were and would become, the Library of Congress, as a national repository, always had sought to secure the most comprehensive coverage of sources relating to the record of the people of the United States. That, in this respect it was succeeding, became apparent on May 13, 1916, when the committee of five on the Organization of a University Center for Higher Studies in Washington, submitted its report to the American Historical Association:

It is unnecessary to dwell at length upon the very great resources afforded by the various collections in Washington to students of history, politics, economics and allied subjects. The Library of Congress is especially rich in the published and public documents not only of the United States and of the several States but of foreign governments as well. Its collections of American newspapers and of printed works relating to America (including Americana) are hardly surpassed, except in certain special directions, by those of any other library. In the field of cartography and maps it leads all other American libraries, while in the field of cultural history its collections of music and of prints give it a leading position. Especially notable are its manuscript collections, which far exceed those of any other American library.

During the First World War, the Library staff was dislocated to some extent, but to no extent comparable to the dislocation it would suffer in the succeeding conflict. On the contrary, it was possible to adapt its functioning to abnormal conditions and, as Mr. Putnam put it, "to play an active and appropriate part in the general war effort of the United States." In cooperation with other agencies it took "unprecedented measures for the education, improvement, and welfare" of the Armed Forces, assisted in the development and application of new techniques and methods and contributed to the "superior

knowledge, understanding, and physical and moral well-being" of the men. The American Library Association, at the invitation of the Government, established a systematically organized "War Service" in this country and overseas. It adopted operations which were "novel in war" and which extended to points as distant as Siberia. The Library of Congress became, in October 1917, the "General Headquarters for the work" for it was both "a governmental library and . . . the national head of our library system." Mr. Putnam, as Librarian of Congress served as General Director. In addition, "every appropriate resource of the Library, bibliographic and otherwise, that could legally be applied was freely accorded, together with, of course, the volunteer aid of numerous members of the staff." Following the armistice, the library and technical needs of the military and naval services continued to be met, and the Library remained on a "war-footing" for many months. It even assembled a considerable library to accompany the American delegation to the conference at Versailles, and later for its constituents here at home purchased many extra copies of Professor Keynes' *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*.

On September 30, 1921, Mr. Putnam, went to that great stone structure on Seventeenth Street, south of Pennsylvania Avenue, where Charles Evans Hughes, Secretary of State of the United States, confided to his keeping two documents, handsomely engrossed on parchment. Mr. Putnam brought them back to the Library and watched while they were carefully placed within a heavy steel safe.

Gaillard Hunt, formerly Chief of the Division of Manuscripts, now editor of the Department of State, had made a suggestion to Mr. Hughes, who, in turn, had made a recommendation to the President.



The result had been an Executive Order, issued the day before:

TRANSFER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

The original engrossed Declaration of Independence and the original engrossed Constitution of the United States, now in the Department of State, are, by authority provided by the Act of Congress entitled "An Act making appropriations for the legislative, executive and judicial expenses of the Government for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1904, and for other purposes," approved February 25, 1903, hereby ordered to be transferred from the Department of State to the custody of the Library of Congress, to be there preserved and exhibited under such rules and regulations as may from time to time be prescribed by the Librarian of Congress.

This Order is issued at the request of the Secretary of State, who has no suitable place for the exhibition of these muniments and whose building is believed to be not as safe a depository for them as the Library of Congress, and for the additional reason that it is desired to satisfy the laudable wish of patriotic Americans to have an opportunity to see the original fundamental documents upon which rest their Independence and their Government.

WARREN G. HARDING

In an act, approved March 20, 1922, Congress appropriated:

For providing a safe, permanent repository of appropriate design, within the Library of Congress Building, for the originals of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, \$12,000, to be immediately available.

Accordingly, in 1924, the original of the Constitution, together with that of the Declaration of Independence, was placed in a shrine on the second floor of the Library building. This shrine, the design of Francis H. Bacon, makes provision for safeguarding the documents from touch and injurious light, while insuring their complete visibility without formality. Mr. Putnam would report the ceremony in these words:

The installation of them, in the presence of the President, the Secretary of State, and a representative group from Congress took place on February 28, without a single utterance, save the singing of two stanzas of "America"—in which the entire company of onlookers joined. The impression upon the audience proved the emotional potency of documents animate with a great tradition.

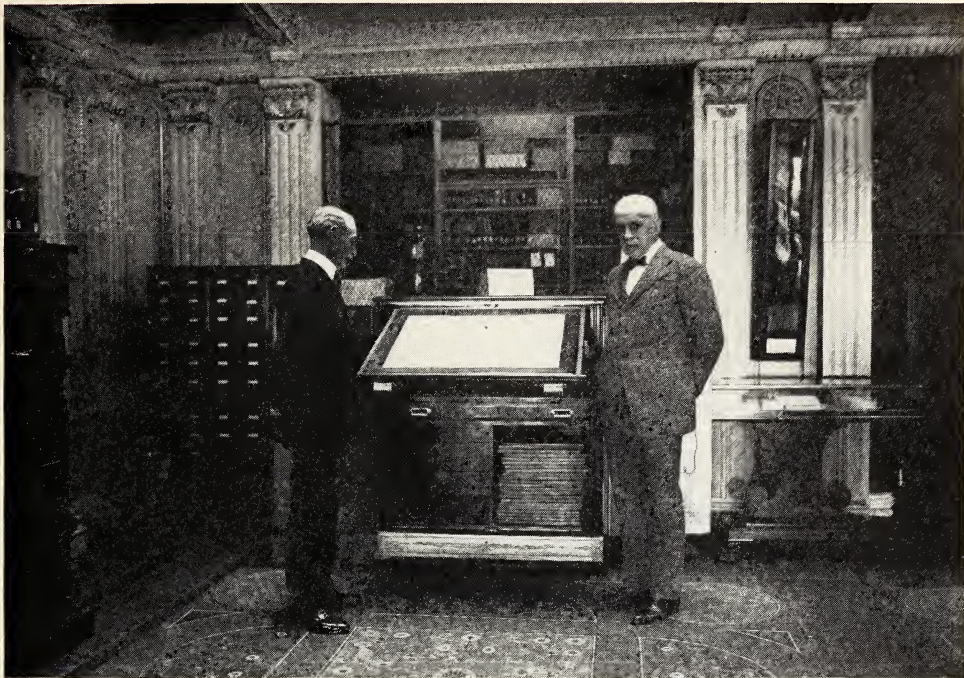
*Not Less Than the Best Obtainable*

The enactment, on March 4, 1923, of the bill "to provide for the classification of civilian positions" in the Federal service advanced by one more stage, legislative action, toward the establishment upon a scientific basis and with suitable definitions and nomenclature of the various positions in the Government, with schedules of compensation conforming. The actual application of the system to the existing positions and employees was, under the act, left to a commission representing the Bureau of the Budget, the Bureau of Efficiency, and the Civil Service Commission, acting upon the recommendations (allocations) submitted by the executive heads of the several establishments. The decisions of that commission would appear in the appropriations estimates for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1924. Action by Congress upon those estimates would then initiate the system in its actual application to the existing service.

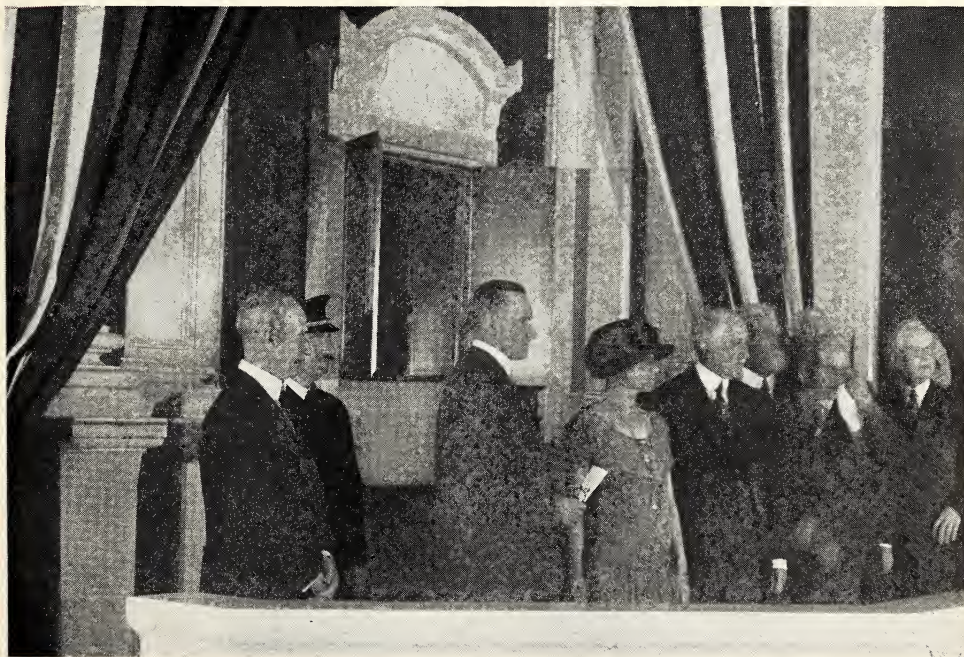
The passage of the act left, therefore, still undetermined the decision as to where within it a particular position was to fall. In the case of many positions its terms were indeed sufficiently definite to leave little question; in the case of others, particularly in the scientific and professional groups, there were uncertainties.

The "allocations" finally submitted by Mr. Putnam to the Commission, were the result of a sifting and challenging procedure involving four stages: (1) Initial allocations by the several chiefs of divisions; (2) a review and revision of these by a commission of seven staff officials





*The transfer of the engrossed originals of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. Above, Herbert Putnam, Librarian of Congress (left), and Gaillard Hunt, Librarian of the Department of State, are shown at the safe in the Library of the State Department where the documents were kept prior to their transfer in 1921. Below, President and Mrs. Coolidge attend the ceremonies on February 28, 1924, marking the dedication of the Shrine.*







headed by the Chief Assistant Librarian; (3) opportunity to the several chiefs to submit further representations in support of decisions negated; (4) a final review by Mr. Putnam; and (5) the submission by Mr. Putnam of a formal communication to the Personnel Classification Board.

The inequalities disclosed in the investigation pervaded the entire Library staff; the discrepancies as between the Library service and the service of other government establishments was particularly apparent in the professional grades. It was upon a recognition of this that the future of the Library as a learned institution must rest; and suitable professional status and compensation seemed to Mr. Putnam a matter "of the most pressing importance, and in no way calculated to disparage the others (clerical and administrative) which were certain to have their due recognition under the identities common to all the Government establishments."

And so, in presenting his first memorandum to the Personnel Classification Board, Mr. Putnam began with a short line: "The Library of Congress is unique." Another paragraph and another line: "Its collection is double the size of any other in America and one of the three largest in the world." These were followed by other short, pithy statements of the Library's general and special materials, emphasizing their distinctions, the ways in which they were set apart, their unique or unusual situation. Then: "Each of the above requires in its development, administration and interpretation, *specialists*, with technique and a knowledge of the subject matter—i. e. knowledge beyond that of the mere bibliographer." He conceded that "all libraries do cataloguing and classification;" but "the Library of Congress is also a central cataloguing bureau for 3,000 American libraries, to which it furnishes results in its printed catalogue cards." Then came this: "The

special knowledge involved in each chief is equivalent to that of a professor in a university." There was always this consideration: "The specialist leaving a library takes with him an accumulated knowledge of the particular collections and the apparatus, and an acquired experience in interpretation, which cannot be replaced."

It was an eloquent, considered, and well-ordered representation of the Library's requirements, and it contained this succinct summary of his position:

As our National Library, and with . . . [its] varied responsibilities, it can not afford to have less than the best obtainable—

- (1) Knowledge, experience, and judgment in the development of its collections;
- (2) Technical perfection in its processes—classification, cataloguing, and the other treatment of material;
- (3) Skill, training, and experience in reference work, bibliography and interpretation;
- (4) In its consultative service (e. g., in law, art, music), specialists who are authorities in the subject matter;
- (5) In its service to our highest tribunal and its bar, not merely the most comprehensive law library, but the most competent administration and interpretation;
- (6) In its legislative service—effective apparatus as to all legislation enacted in every country, and experts who will digest it, the law, the facts, the authorities in matters of opinion: experts comparable at least to those who are employed by the interests seeking legislation.

And after the experience of a year he would write:

It was not to be expected . . . that the first applications of a scheme so comprehensive, on a basis professedly philosophic, could be free from inconsistencies, from discrepancies, and from individual hardship. All have been experienced. In the aggregate, however, they are not to be weighed against the vast benefit of the scheme itself—the decision for it, the adoption of it, the progress under it, and the acceptance by Congress of the resulting decisions.

It would take twenty years finally to eliminate those inconsistencies and discrepancies and cases of individual hard-



ship, but gradually they would be eliminated, and he had fought a fight which was good.

### *The Apparatus Is Enlarged*

Through his representative in such matters, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., notified Mr. Putnam on May 25, 1927, that the Librarian of Congress might draw on him for \$50,000 a year for five years for an undertaking looking toward the enlargement of the Library's bibliographic apparatus. The "apparatus" within the purpose of Mr. Rockefeller's grant was not the ordinary catalogs of our own collections, which were part of the routine and the proper care of the Government itself. It was to comprise a body of records auxiliary to these, which might aid the Library to inform a librarian, a bibliographer, or a research investigator of these points:

1. As to what material (literature) exists.
2. As to where, especially within the United States and therefore within reach, a copy or copies of it may exist.

In announcing the gift, Mr. Putnam made it clear that Mr. Rockefeller had not been moved to this act of generosity "merely upon impulse," and that his decision had been reached "only after an investigation extending over a year—an investigation which disclosed (1) that . . . project work had already been initiated here which sufficed as a demonstration, but also (2) that only by the application of resources more substantial than could be expected from the Public Treasury could this work expand into a dimension of large general utility."

As early as 1901, the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library had exchanged copies of all their printed catalog cards in order that eventually each would have a card list of all the important books owned by the other. This could be regarded as the first step toward a union

catalog. The plan had soon been adopted by other libraries, each of which had thus accumulated a card record of the holdings of the Library of Congress, while the Library of Congress, at the same time had been building up a register of the contents of its collections. By 1909, the accumulated contributions from nine important libraries had been sufficient in number to require their arrangement in a single author alphabet. It had then been stated that "the catalogue when completed will contain about 600,000 entries. Taken with the present accumulation of between 600,000 and 700,000 entries in the Library of Congress, it will constitute the closest approximation now available to a complete record of books in American libraries."

In the succeeding years several additional libraries had become contributors of cards; the number having increased to about 2,000,000 without the inclusion of any cards representing the contents of the Library of Congress. Now this growth had been attained with no further effort on the part of the Library beyond the labor involved in receiving and filing the entries submitted by the contributing institutions. The ever-increasing potential usefulness of this record had been well understood, and when the subject of the development of the union catalog had been laid before Mr. Rockefeller's advisers in 1926, they had been impressed with it as a unique opportunity for service to American libraries generally.

The reorganization and amplification of it contemplated the compilation of a "selective repertorium" of the research libraries of the United States. This, of course, involved a radical expansion of the existing record, by increasing the number of collections represented. This problem was "immediately attacked," first, by the incorporation of the printed entries for the Library's own collections, then descriptive

of about 975,000 titles; second, by the transcription and addition of 375,000 titles in the Library represented only by "temporary" or manuscript entries; third, by clipping, mounting on cards, and filing, the printed book-catalogs of 28 important American libraries; and fourth, by inviting, and making arrangements to secure, the affirmative participation of the principal research institutions in the United States.

At the end of the project-period the union catalog would contain more than 8,000,000 entries, its maintenance and further development would be assumed by the Government, it would be housed in a specially constructed room provided by the "eastern extension" of the Main building, and by the middle of 1946 it would have grown to nearly 14,000,000 cards supplied by nearly 2,500 American libraries. Today, it constitutes both an impressive symbol of, and an indispensable mechanism for, the national service of the Library of Congress.

### *Hereby Authorized to Accept*

Events in 1925 were both memorable and decisive. During the one hundred and twenty-five years of its existence, particularly during the first quarter of the twentieth century, the Library of Congress had already established itself as a cultural institution of national and international importance. With the acceptance of the Gardiner Greene Hubbard bequest and the establishment of the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation, which led to the authorization for the Library of Congress Trust Fund Board, new opportunities and new fields of service became possible of realization. These activities constituted a departure from the philosophy of librarianship as ordinarily understood in terms of governmental subsidy and promotion. Under the earlier philosophy the Library's functions were,

as is the case of most large public libraries, merely passive. The Library was prepared to render bibliographical and reference assistance only in response to direct and specific requests. However, with the establishment of the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation, a new concept emerged, because active participation in the cultural life of the community was both implied and intended through the purpose for which this endowment was established. Furthermore, this medium more than others extended and intensified the personal contacts between the Library of Congress, at the seat of government, and the population of the country at large. The significance of this broadening concept was, from the outset, well understood by Congress and the Library of Congress in 1925, but then it would have been impossible to foresee all of its possible implications. During the twenty-one years which followed, the activities of the Coolidge Foundation and other endowments held by the Library of Congress Trust Fund Board have strengthened the Library of Congress as a cultural force in the lives of the American people. Similarly it is difficult today to forecast the designs which these activities will fashion during the ensuing twenty-one years.

Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge (Mrs. Frederic Shurtleff Coolidge) had already achieved international fame as a patroness of music before she was constrained to approach the Library of Congress in 1924. The daughter of Albert Sprague, well-known Chicago business man (Sprague-Warner Corporation) she had, in her youth, received excellent musical training and had appeared publicly and successfully as a concert pianist. Moreover, she had been remarkably generous in supporting musical activities in various parts of the country. It was not until 1918, however, that her beneficence crystallized into a planned program. In that year she gave



her first festival of chamber music in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. At this festival the first "Berkshire Prize" for an original composition was awarded. These competitions became internationally famous; compositions from many of the world's outstanding composers were submitted. The festivals themselves soon achieved wide recognition and were attended by music lovers from all over the country. It was not surprising, therefore, that in 1923 Mrs. Coolidge, realizing the significance of her contributions in the encouragement and diffusion of chamber music, should seek a permanent home for these activities. She chose, as the most suitable institution, the Library of Congress, and consulted Mr. Putnam, concerning a possible foundation to be endowed for this purpose. As a result of these early conferences, the Library of Congress, in cooperation with the offices of the Smithsonian Institution, presented at the Freer Gallery three concerts, on February 7 to 9, 1924, at the expense of Mrs. Coolidge. This festival, generally believed to have been the Government's first venture in the field of chamber music, was most successful and received favorable attention both in this country and abroad. At the same time, Mrs. Coolidge presented to the Library the holograph scores which she had acquired as a result of her activities in Pittsfield.

Following the success of these three "experimental" concerts, Mrs. Coolidge made a formal offer to the United States Government through the Library of Congress: First, to build an auditorium in the Library building to be used for performance; and, second, to establish an endowment which would supply funds necessary for the purposes of the proposed Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation. Mr. Putnam formally transmitted this offer to Congress on December 4, 1924, and the offer was then ordered to be printed, and

referred to the Joint Committee on the Library. The primary objective of this gift, as stated by Mr. Putnam, was the promotion of "the study and appreciation of music in America." This gift of what has come to be known as the Coolidge Auditorium was accepted in a joint resolution by both houses of Congress, and was approved by the President on January 23, 1925. Mrs. Coolidge had offered \$60,000, but the actual cost of the structure proved to be considerably in excess of this amount, and, most generously, she provided the additional sum required. Construction of the auditorium was hastened and it was completed in time for the first festival of chamber music which took place from October 28 to October 30, 1925.

Coincidental with the gift of an auditorium, Mrs. Coolidge established an endowment to support the activities of the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation. Since there was no government agency authorized to accept the endowment, Mrs. Coolidge placed it in the hands of a trust company. This act, however, demonstrated the need for appropriate provision on the part of the United States Government to assume the fiduciary responsibilities of endowments. As a result the Library of Congress Trust Fund Board was established by an act of Congress approved March 3, 1925. The text of this act, as originally passed in 1925, and as amended, is as follows:

AN ACT To create a Library of Congress Trust Fund Board, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That a board is hereby created and established, to be known as the Library of Congress Trust Fund Board (hereinafter referred to as the board), which shall consist of the Secretary of the Treasury, the chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library, the Librarian of Congress, and two persons appointed by the President for a term of five years each (the first appointments being for three and five years, respectively). Three

members of the board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the board shall have an official seal, which shall be judicially noticed. The board may adopt rules and regulations in regard to its procedure and the conduct of its business.

No compensation shall be paid to the members of the board for their services as such members, but they shall be reimbursed for the expenses necessarily incurred by them, out of the income from the fund or funds in connection with which such expenses are incurred. The voucher of the chairman of the board shall be sufficient evidence that the expenses are properly allowable. Any expenses of the board, including the cost of its seal, not properly chargeable to the income of any trust fund held by it, shall be estimated for in the annual estimates of the Librarian for the maintenance of the Library of Congress.

SEC. 2. The board is hereby authorized to accept, receive, hold, and administer such gifts, bequests, or devises of property for the benefit of, or in connection with, the Library, its collections, or its service, as may be approved by the board and by the Joint Committee on the Library.

The moneys or securities composing the trust funds given or bequeathed to the board shall be receipted for by the Secretary of the Treasury, who shall invest, reinvest, or retain investments as the board may from time to time determine. The income as and when collected shall be deposited with the Treasurer of the United States, who shall enter it in a special account to the credit of the Library of Congress and subject to disbursement by the Librarian for the purposes in each case specified; and the Treasurer of the United States is hereby authorized to honor the requisitions of the Librarian made in such manner and in accordance with such regulations as the Treasury may from time to time prescribe: *Provided, however,* That the board is not authorized to engage in any business nor to exercise any voting privilege which may be incidental to securities in its hands, nor shall the board make any investments that could not lawfully be made by a trust company in the District of Columbia, except that it may make any investments directly authorized by the instrument of gift, and may retain any investments accepted by it.

In the absence of any specification to the contrary, the board may deposit the principal sum, in cash, with the Treasurer of the United States as a permanent loan to the United States Treasury, and the Treasurer shall thereafter credit such deposit with interest at the rate of 4 per centum per annum, payable semiannually, such interest,

as income, being subject to disbursement by the Librarian of Congress for the purposes specified: *Provided, however,* That the total of such principal sums at any time so held by the Treasurer under this authorization shall not exceed the sum of \$5,000,000.

SEC. 3. The board shall have perpetual succession, with all the usual powers and obligations of a trustee, including the power to sell, except as herein limited, in respect of all property, moneys, or securities which shall be conveyed, transferred, assigned, bequeathed, delivered, or paid over to it for the purposes above specified. The board may be sued in the District Court of the United States for the District of Columbia, which is hereby given jurisdiction of such suits, for the purpose of enforcing the provisions of any trust accepted by it.

SEC. 4. Nothing in this act shall be construed as prohibiting or restricting the Librarian of Congress from accepting, in the name of the United States, gifts or bequests of money for immediate disbursement in the interest of the Library, its collections, or its service. Such gifts or bequests, after acceptance by the Librarian, shall be paid by the donor or his representative to the Treasurer of the United States, whose receipts shall be their acquittance. The Treasurer of the United States shall enter them in a special account to the credit of the Library of Congress and subject to disbursement by the Librarian for the purposes in each case specified.

SEC. 5. Gifts or bequests or devises to or for the benefit of the Library of Congress, including those to the board, and the income therefrom, shall be exempt from all Federal taxes, including all taxes, levied by the District of Columbia.

SEC. 6. Employees of the Library of Congress who perform special functions for the performance of which funds have been entrusted to the board or the Librarian, or in connection with cooperative undertakings in which the Library of Congress is engaged, shall not be subject to the proviso contained in the act making appropriations for the legislative, executive, and judicial expenses of the Government for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1918, and for other purposes, approved March 3, 1917, in Thirty-ninth Statutes at Large, at page 1106; nor shall any additional compensation so paid to such employees be construed as a double salary under the provisions of section 6 of the act making appropriations for the legislative, executive, and judicial expenses of the Government for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1917, as amended (Thirty-ninth Statutes at Large, page 582).



SEC. 7: The board shall submit to the Congress an annual report of the moneys or securities received and held by it and of its operations.

It was recommended unanimously by the Joint Committee on the Library, passed both Houses by unanimous consent at the second session of the Sixty-eighth Congress, approved by the President March 3, 1925; as amended by act (S. 90) approved January 27, 1926, by act (H. R. 11849) approved April 13, 1936, by act (H. R. 12353) approved June 23, 1936, by act (S. 4038) approved June 25, 1936, and by act (H. R. 7114) approved October 2, 1942.

The law provides, *inter alia*, for setting up in the United States Treasury a "permanent loan account" which, by statute, may be increased to \$5,000,000 which will draw interest at the rate of 4 percent per annum. Other friends of the Library have taken advantage of this opportunity to endow certain specific enterprises until, at present, there is in this account \$1,507,147.00. With the exception of an irrevocable trust for which Mrs. Coolidge has provided by letters testamentary, all other funds which she set aside for the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation are now administered by the Library of Congress Trust Fund Board.

In explaining her desire to promote the study and appreciation of chamber music through the construction of an auditorium and through the establishment of the foundation, Mrs. Coolidge described her purpose in a note to the Librarian of Congress in which she wrote:

I have wished to make possible, through the Library of Congress, the composition and performance of music in ways which might otherwise be considered too unique or too expensive to be ordinarily undertaken. Not this alone, of course, nor with a view to extravagance for its own sake; but as an occasional possibility of giving precedence to considerations of quality over those of quantity, to artistic rather than to economic values; and to opportunity rather than to expediency. For this reason I believe that advice should be sought from

broadminded and disinterested musicians, whether or not official, whether or not professional. And, for the same reason, I hope that the audience may be chosen very largely from those whose musical taste and experience qualify them to listen sincerely and appreciatively.

In another letter to Mr. Putnam dated January 29, 1925, Mrs. Coolidge elaborated on the type of audience which she believed would be appropriate to festivals of chamber music planned for presentation in the Library of Congress. In this connection she acknowledged:

I foresee that this question is going to be a difficult one, as indeed it always has been in Pittsfield, but I think that the complete change of administration and of locality will solve for us one problem which it was impossible to solve in Pittsfield, namely, the invitation of guests on other than musical grounds. I trust that from the beginning this event will be considered a national and professional one and that the fashionable element as such will not feel itself left out if it has no musical qualifications to recommend its inclusion. Fashion is an enemy to art, I think, and if we aim at a musical center which shall be as respectively national as is the Library in its activities, I think it would be an easy matter to explain the omission of the society element.

In his Annual Report for 1925, Mr. Putnam added his own interpretation of the significance of Mrs. Coolidge's gift:

In these aspects Mrs. Coolidge's gift and endowment are absolutely consistent with the scheme and policy of the Library as the National Library and an agency of the Federal Government, which is, not to duplicate local or ordinary effort, nor supplant it where the project is within its proper field and abilities, but to do for American scholarship and cultivation what is not likely to be done by other agencies.

In this résumé it is not possible to describe what the Coolidge Foundation has accomplished up to the present time but it is interesting to review its activities during its first twenty-one years to discover in what particulars the original idea has worked out in actual practice. After the establishment of the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation in the Library of





*A typical bookstack in the Main Library Building. Each deck is connected to the Central Desk in the Main Reading Room by pneumatic tubes and a mechanical book carrier.*





Congress, Mrs. Coolidge herself did not give up her interest in the Berkshire festivals at South Mountain in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. In fact a certain amount of the influence of her Berkshire activities may be reflected in the activities of the Foundation in Washington, since the emphasis was for the first few years placed on festivals of chamber music ordinarily held at annual intervals in the Coolidge Auditorium. But the location of the Foundation in a Federal institution was certain to produce a gradual evolution of its activities. It is important to note that Mrs. Coolidge herself has been an active member of the committee of three which has administered the Foundation from its beginning to the present, with the result that it cannot be said that the gradual change in outlook has been to any degree contrary to her original intention. The alterations have not affected the primary purpose to promote chamber music, but rather the manner in which this promotion has been undertaken.

Mrs. Coolidge's letter, quoted above, indicates that when first she approached the Library, she thought largely in terms of concerts presented before invited audiences. It is obvious from the context that this concept was not based on exclusiveness. The explanation must instead be found in the fact that at that time the audience for chamber music was a decidedly limited one. As years went by, however, the influence of Mrs. Coolidge's work and the work of the Coolidge Foundation became apparent when many of the music lovers invited to attend the festivals at Pittsfield or in Washington went home and there presented programs of chamber music for the benefit of their own communities. It is not surprising, therefore, that they appealed to the Coolidge Foundation for aid in promoting their local performances. Neither is it altogether surprising that the Founda-

tion, aware of its national responsibilities, gradually shifted the emphasis of its activities from Washington to the presentation of chamber music concerts in other places. In addition to giving an annual festival, supplemented by other chamber music concerts held in the Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress, the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation soon sought two other media for reaching an interested public. One of these was the presentation or the subsidizing of so-called "extension concerts." These, for the most part, took place at colleges, universities, libraries or other educational institutions, although a few have been performed under the auspices of local chamber music societies. Still another method of creating interest in chamber music has been through radio broadcasts.

It is important to record that from its inception in 1925 through the fiscal year ending June 30, 1946, the Coolidge Foundation had sponsored more than 800 concerts. Of these, 513 were "extension concerts" and 94 were broadcast over national radio networks emanating from the studios. (This does not include the many concerts held either in the Coolidge Auditorium or at the various universities before audiences, which were also broadcast to the public at large.) These figures present an interesting contrast to the 10 festivals of chamber music held in the Library (48 individual concerts) and the 161 miscellaneous concerts of chamber music presented by the Foundation in the Coolidge Auditorium. Extension concerts have been held in institutions located in nearly all the States of the Union, as well as in the territories of Hawaii and Puerto Rico. As a result, it has been possible for the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation, because of obvious budgetary limitations only to respond to a fraction of the applications it receives from educational institutions for financial aid. Although



continuing to present a small number of concerts each year in the Coolidge Auditorium for the benefit of the music lovers of Washington, its main effort is now devoted to the production of "extension" concerts. If a university or college does not receive an affirmative answer in any one year, an effort is made to cooperate in the presentation of chamber music on that campus as soon thereafter as may be possible. The effectiveness of its work can best be judged by the large and enthusiastic audiences attending concerts wherever they are presented.

In addition to the concert activities of the Coolidge Foundation, certain secondary functions should be mentioned. The most important of these is the creation of new music by commissioning works from well-known composers or through prize competitions which are held from time to time. As a result, the Foundation has been responsible for the production of some of the most important works written for chamber ensembles during the present century. The Coolidge Foundation has also on occasion sponsored lectures, subsidized publications, and in other ways furthered musicology in general. Finally, it should be pointed out that as a result of commissions, prizes, and the personal gifts of Mrs. Coolidge, the Music Division now possesses the finest existing collection of holographs of compositions for chamber music by modern composers.

When Mrs. Coolidge's gift was first offered in 1924, there were many distinguished government officials who cooperated in the establishment of the Foundation and the Trust Fund Board. In addition to Mr. Putnam, and Carl Engel, then Chief of the Music Division, special mention should be made of Senator George Wharton Pepper, of Pennsylvania, who drafted the Library of Congress Trust Fund Act. Another Member of Congress who contributed to the develop-

ment of the Library's musical program was Nicholas Longworth, Speaker of the House of Representatives, himself an accomplished musician. In fact, he served as president of the organization known as the "Friends of Music in the Library of Congress" from 1928 when it was organized until his death in 1931. It was not surprising, therefore, that a group of his friends banded together to set up an endowment, known as The Nicholas Longworth Foundation in the Library of Congress, for the purpose of giving memorial concerts in the Library in the honor of a legislator who did so much to promote the art. This was not the first endowment of its kind to be received by the Trust Fund Board, for in 1929, the Beethoven Association founded a trust to be known as the Sonneck Memorial Fund, in memory of the late Oscar G. Sonneck, sometime Chief of the Music Division. The income of this fund, designed to promote original musicological research, has been used to subsidize publication of books that are serious and scholarly studies of American music, the field of Sonneck's own specialization.

In view of the initial success of the work of the Coolidge Foundation, it was not surprising that another important patroness should have chosen the Library of Congress as the permanent home for her activities. Mrs. Matthew John Whittall (the widow of an eminent Worcester, Massachusetts business man) presented to the Library in 1935 and 1936 her unique collection of Stradivari stringed instruments and Tourte bows and donated to the Trust Fund Board a sum of money for the support of what was thenceforth to be known as the Gertrude Clarke Whittall Foundation. The primary purpose of this Foundation is the promotion of chamber music through the presentation of concerts using the beautiful instruments which she presented to the Library. The original sum which Mrs. Whittall gave to the Trust

Fund Board was \$100,000 but she has steadily added to it until in 1946 the principal now amounts to \$468,231.25. Furthermore, Mrs. Whittall gave to the Library funds for the erection of a building in which the permanent exhibit cases for the instruments are housed and which, attached to the Coolidge Auditorium, is used for smaller audiences. Because these valuable instruments may not leave the Library building except for purposes of repair, the activities of the Whittall Foundation have been limited to concerts performed in Washington. It should be pointed out, however, that of the 185 concerts given by the Whittall Foundation during the 10 years of its existence, 20 have been broadcast over national networks emanating from the Whittall Pavilion without any audience and that many others which took place in the Coolidge Auditorium, have likewise been broadcast to the Nation at large. As in the case of the Coolidge Foundation, the Whittall Foundation has certain secondary activities of great importance. Through Mrs. Whittall's generosity the Foundation has been able to acquire a remarkable collection of original manuscripts of the world's greatest composers as well as letters, pictures, documents, and other memorabilia. The Foundation is engaged also in a publication program which will make the knowledge derivable from these holographs available to students not only in this country but throughout the entire world. The Library of Congress had come to be generally recognized as the world's center of chamber music, even before the creation of the Whittall Foundation, but since its establishment that position has not been challenged.

During the past ten years, the Music Division has been the beneficiary of other important endowments and special funds, although only two are held by the Trust Fund Board. In 1942, because of the war,

"the Friends of Music in the Library of Congress" decided to suspend operations and to contribute its capital funds to the Trust Fund Board as an endowment for the benefit of the Music Division. The purpose of this fund is the continuation of the various activities previously carried on by the organization. The bequest of the late Dayton C. Miller, of Cleveland, Ohio, contained an endowment to be used in connection with the flute collection which he left to the Library. In 1945, the late Bertha C. Elson left two endowments in memory of her late husband Louis C. Elson, eminent critic and historian in the field of music. One of these is for an annual lecture to be held in the Library on a musical subject; proceeds from the second are to be expended as the Librarian considers best calculated to foster the interest of the public in music or in the literature of music. Finally, mention should be made of a grant from the Carnegie Corporation for the establishment of a recording laboratory in the Music Division which includes a revolving fund enabling it to maintain a part of its activities on a self-sustaining and self-perpetuating basis. By means of the grant the Library was enabled to acquire permanent as well as portable equipment essential to a complete recording and even broadcasting service. Recording paraphernalia and a recording studio were soon in operation, and a recording program was promptly instituted. It was now possible to record the Library's chamber music concerts and other important events that could be preserved in sound. It was possible to capture important radio broadcasts and to assemble series of documentary recordings reflecting American opinions and attitudes. It was possible to plan and execute long-range recording expeditions to collect the folklore and folk music of the country in all its variety and richness. Literary, historical, and sociological material could



also be preserved and made available to the public which was thus potentially provided with a wealth of cultural phenomena, on pressings, not obtainable through commercial channels. Moreover, a regular recording duplication service could be instituted whereby copies of specific recordings, under no restrictions, in the Library's collections might be ordered by any individual or institution.

These have been described in detail as typical of the uses to which such funds have been, and may be, applied. But in other areas of concentration the uses are diverse and equally concerned, in one way or another, in the progress of scholarship. Actually, since the creation of the Trust Fund Board, twenty-three gifts or bequests of monies, securities or properties have been received. Their total face value is approximately \$1,750,000. Their purpose and their principal are set forth in the following list:

- 1925 1. Manuscripts Division—a donation (\$192,671.36) from James Benjamin Wilbur, to reproduce manuscript source material in European archives bearing on American history.
- 1926 2. The Library as a whole—a donation (\$6,017.33) from Richard Rogers Bowker, for the furtherance of the Library's bibliographic service.
- 1927 3. Manuscripts Division—an endowment from William Evarts Benjamin (\$72,696.62) for a chair of American history.
- 1927 4. Prints and Photographs Division—an endowment from the Carnegie Corporation of New York (\$93,307.98), for a chair of the fine arts.
- 1927 5. Hispanic Foundation—an endowment from Archer Milton Huntington (\$112,305.74), for the purchase of Hispanic material.
- 1928 6. Hispanic Foundation—an endowment from Archer Milton Huntington (\$49,746.52, known as the Hispanic Society Fund), for a chair of the literature of Spain and Portugal.
- 1929 7. Aeronautics Division—a grant from the Daniel Guggenheim Fund for the promotion of aeronautics (\$90,654.22), for a chair of aeronautics.
- 1931 8. The Library as a whole—a bequest of Alexis V. Babine (\$6,684.74), for the purchase of Slavic material.
- 1933 9. Manuscripts Division—a bequest of James Benjamin Wilbur (\$31,285.29), for the treatment of source material in the field of American history.
- 1933 10. The Library as a whole—a bequest of James Benjamin Wilbur (\$81,856.92) for a chair of geography in the Maps Division, or other use as the Trust Fund Board may direct.
- 1936 11. The Library as a whole—an endowment from Archer Milton Huntington (half the income from \$873,000) for the equipment and maintenance of the Hispanic Room and for a chair of poetry of the English language.
- 1937 12. Prints and Photographs Division—a bequest of Joseph Pennell (\$314,149.33) for the purchase of material for the Pennell collection.
- 1938 13. The Library as a whole—a gift of Annie-May Hegeman, known as the Henry Kirke Porter Memorial Fund in memory of the donor's father, for the maintenance of consultancies or for any other needs of the Library. The gift originally assessed at \$186,310 increased to \$290,500 through action of the Trust Fund Board.

Special interest attaches to the Pennell bequest of 1937. Under the laws of the State of Pennsylvania it seemed liable to a tax levy of 10 percent, or over \$30,000. The Librarian reported in 1937: "Through representations (conveyed by our law librarian, Mr. Vance) to the authorities at Harrisburg, which won the sympathy and friendly cooperation of the Governor, the attorney general, and the leaders of both parties in the legislature, the statute exempting certain educational institutions from such a tax was amended . . . so as to include 'a national library.' And the friendliness of the authorities served also to waive any question as to whether such an amendment could benefit a bequest made prior to its enactment."

The law in question was "An Act relating to free, public, nonsectarian libraries and branch libraries within this Commonwealth . . .", approved July 20, 1917 (P. L. 1143), and the amendment of June 5, 1937, affected Section 27. The amendment (P. L. 1937; 1701-1702) was "An Act To amend section twenty-seven of the act, approved the twentieth day of July, one thousand nine hundred seventeen . . . by exempting from collateral inheritance tax all gifts, devises, grants or endowments made to national libraries."

With the accumulation of endowments, accepted by the Library of Congress Trust Fund Board, had come the creation of "chairs." From these chairs various chiefs derived additional emolument, and by means of them the Librarian was enabled to induce to the Library service, specialists in various fields of knowledge who could not be attracted by the Government stipend alone. These *honoraria* had statutory justification in the act creating the Trust Fund Board itself, and brought the recipient's income from the Library to an approximation of a salary attached to an ordinary professorship at a university. In his address to the American Library Association on May 30, 1928, the Librarian explained the use of the word. "In the employment of this term (drawn from academic usage) there has been needed some explanation, especially that the 'chair' is not a teaching chair; nor is it, on the other hand, a 'research' chair, such as exist at many universities. It is an *interpretive* chair, whose incumbent will combine with administrative duties an active aid and counsel to those pursuing research in the Library and general promotion of research within his field."

Such a development led to further consideration of increasing the scholarly resources of the Library's staff, the result being the adoption of a series of consultantships. The Librarian reported, in 1928,

what his conception of the system was: "a 'consultant,' as distinguished from the holder of a 'chair,' will aid us generally in the development of the collections, and inquirers in the use of them, but be free from conventional administrative responsibility. He will receive, therefore, not a stipend such as the latter relation would warrant, but the recognition of a service special in character implied by an honorarium. It is my belief that many such a specialist, mature in scholarship, who has completed his period of teaching or research but still retains the vigor for some years of a responsive service, would be glad to render it in association with the National Library. . . . We could not ask that it be wholly gratuitous; but a recognition of it in the form of an honorarium of, say, \$2,500 per annum, might suffice."

The plan was executed during the next fiscal year and the first consultant engaged was Señor Don Juan Riaño, whose services were obtained through the generosity of Archer M. Huntington. Following this notable donation the General Education Board made a grant to the Library, of \$75,000 "to carry out a plan for the development of a system of research consultants." It was put into execution on July 1, 1929, and the Librarian reported the fields covered during the current season. They were Hispanic literature, English literature, classical literature, European history, economics, science and philosophy. The subject of church history was soon added. Honorary consultantships were also established, comprising public-spirited scholars and specialists "resident or sojourning in Washington" who had "expressed willingness to be referred to in any emergency when their particular, specialized knowledge may prove helpful." The already comprehensive capacities of the regular staff were thus enlarged by the voluntary



cooperation of experts in military history, geography, Chinese history and culture, and paleography. In this category Roman law was the first addition.

Not only in his annual reports did the Librarian describe the duties of the consultants. He explained their usefulness and importance in numerous articles and addresses, and occasionally expressed surprise that the creation of the consultant-ships was looked upon as a library innovation. Thus in the first issue of *The Library Quarterly*, he wrote:

The affiliation with the staff of a library of a group of such specialists representing at least the main fields of learning might bring to its service their criticism and suggestion in the development of the collections (and even the perfection of the apparatus), and might bring to the reader the benefit of their counsel in his actual use of the material and apparatus. Nor would it be merely the inexpert to whom their aid might be appropriate, since even a mature investigator approaching newly a considerable collection might well be saved time and otherwise inconvenienced by such counsel from one who, familiar with the subject matter and the methods of research in it, has acquired also a familiarity with that particular collection and its special apparatus. . . .

The validity of the idea, which in the abstract has seemed convincing enough, has certainly been demonstrated by the single year's experience of its even limited operation . . . in the aid to the development of its collections, by the testimony of such of the public as have had the benefit of the interpretative service, and in the interest and enthusiasm of the men of learning who constituted the group for the first year of experiment. . . .

To us at Washington the project of these consultants is a perfectly natural evolution and merely the recognition of an opportunity quite obvious. Indeed, it carries only one stage farther and in a larger dimension that mediation between the collections and the inquiring public which is in varying degrees the effort of all our public libraries. We have therefore been somewhat surprised at the impression that it has made as if in its nature an invention or discovery; and as this impression has been coupled with a disposition (not at all disparaging) to ascribe to us the characteristics of a university, we have to disclaim any such excessive pretensions, stipulating that these specialists are not here either to teach or

themselves pursue research in the interest of the Library, and that though with the incumbents of our "chairs" we refer to them informally as "a faculty," their relation with our constituency will not be didactic in that sense. Nor will the addition of this resource to our service imply that we are proposing to institute an academic relation with our readers, undertake any responsibility for the control of their studies, or confer upon them any "credits" for successful achievement in them.

Again, in *Overbibliotekar Wilhelm Munthe på femtiårsdagen 20. oktober 1933 fra fagfeller og venner* (Oslo: Grøndahl & Søn's Boktrykkeri, 1933; pp. 211-213) the Librarian contributed a short article on *Interpretive Service in a Library for Research*, referring to the consultants as follows:

It is a simple advance to another concept: that of a group of specialists without administrative duties whose service will be purely advisory: to the Library, in perfecting its collections and, in certain features, its apparatus; and to the public, in lending aid to the use of them. . . .

The experiment of this service has been highly successful. Some of the men for it were naturally scholars who had retired from teaching or research and were free to come to Washington and pursue here a useful public service for which their knowledge qualified them, and for which (not requiring administrative responsibilities) their physical capacity, even at a normally "retiring" age, was fully competent; but among the men secured have been some much younger who have continued, outside of the library hours, to pursue other activities of a professional sort. There is nothing in the relation to preclude this.

And there has been nothing.

### *To the Complete Satisfaction of Congress*

To Mr. Putnam, the three years which followed might "fairly be deemed the initiation of a new era; the experience of them an assurance toward a future more elaborate than would ordinarily be conceded to a library." That future was "still distant," and he realized that "we have far to go and many levels still to reach." Actually, he insisted, "in even the fundamentals 'our house is not yet in order' and won't be till we have caught

up with the classification, the cataloguing and the production of the cards." There was, he said, "no single particular, save one, in which we are not defective. But that one is an asset. It is optimism."

And perhaps, for that he had good reason. Perhaps there was a deep and abiding appreciation of what he had done and what he was doing and what he hoped to do. He had received visits from the "vigorous and enterprising administrators" of the "other great research libraries abroad." Sir Frederic Kenyon had come from the British Museum, M. Roland-Marcel from the Bibliothèque Nationale, and Herr Kruss from the Staatsbibliothek at Berlin. Mr. Putnam had been impressed "with their efforts in bibliographic projects cooperative in character, some of which" were "likely to take on international aspects." In any event, it could hardly have been less than gratifying to read the report which the Honorable Robert Luce, chairman of the House Committee on the Library, presented on January 26, 1928:

The Library of Congress is the largest in the Western Hemisphere and the third largest in the world. It is an independent establishment, so that its head has virtually the complete responsibility for its conduct, being accountable only to Congress. He has in his charge real estate valued at approximately \$9,000,000 with a collection now numbering about 10,000,000 items, which includes about 3,500,000 books and pamphlets, of a value that cannot be estimated. He has the direction of a working force numbering 757 persons. In brief, his responsibilities are far in excess of those of any other similar institution in America. In point of compensation, however, this has not been recognized. Several of the cities pay their librarians \$10,000 or more and some of the men who have been trained in the Library of Congress are to-day receiving in excess of \$10,000 in other library work.

The present incumbent of the position of Librarian, Mr. Herbert Putnam, has occupied the place since April, 1899, to the complete satisfaction of Congress. The work under his care has gone on with remarkable absence of friction and with great efficiency. Due to his zeal and

ability, the activities of the Library have been broadened to noteworthy degree. He has aroused the admiration and enlisted the sympathetic interest of men whose aid in still further expanding the usefulness of the Library bids fair to be of far-spreading benefit. Surely his long, faithful, and efficient service may justly be recognized.

In view of these things the American Library Association has passed resolutions declaring the position of Librarian of Congress to be "the most distinguished and responsible library position in the United States" and expressing the belief that its salary ought to be fixed at not less than \$10,000. Agreeing with this, your Committee on the Library recommends the passage of H. R. 9036, making the salary of the Librarian of Congress \$10,000 a year.

The bill became a law on March 6.

And there were, in the years ahead, increasing evidences that his integrity, idealism and rugged persistence had been met with the grateful response of American citizens. In the fall of 1931, *The Epic of America*, by James Truslow Adams, issued from the press, and in its Epilogue was this tribute:

Like the country roads, our whole national life is yet cluttered up with the disorderly remnants of our frontier experience, and all help should be given to those who are honestly trying to clean up either the one or the other. But the frontier also left us our American dream, which is being wrought out in many hearts and many institutions.

Among the latter I often think that the one which best exemplifies the dream is the greatest library in this land of libraries, the Library of Congress. . . .

The Library of Congress . . . has come straight from the heart of democracy, as it has been taken to it, and I here use it as a symbol of what democracy can accomplish on its own behalf. Many have made gifts to it, but it was created by ourselves through Congress, which has steadily and increasingly shown itself generous and understanding toward it. Founded and built by the people, it is for the people. Anyone who has used the great collections of Europe, with their restrictions and red tape and difficulty of access, praises God for American democracy when he enters the stacks of the Library of Congress.

But there is more to the Library of Congress for the American dream than merely the wise appro-



priation of public money. There is the public itself, in two of its aspects. The Library of Congress could not have become what it is to-day, with all the generous aid of Congress, without such a citizen as Dr. Herbert Putnam at the directing head of it. He and his staff have devoted their lives to making the four million and more of books and pamphlets serve the public to a degree that cannot be approached by any similar great institution in the Old World. Then there is the public that uses these facilities. As one looks down on the general reading room, which alone contains ten thousand volumes which may be read without even the asking, one sees the seats filled with silent readers, old and young, rich and poor, black and white, the executive and the laborer, the general and the private, the noted scholar and the schoolboy, all reading at their own library provided by their own democracy. It has always seemed to me to be a perfect working out in a concrete example of the American dream—the means provided by the accumulated resources of the people themselves, a public intelligent enough to use them, and men of high distinction, themselves a part of the great democracy, devoting themselves to the good of the whole, uncloistered.

When, two years later, a small and thoughtless group sought the advantage that might accrue from the conversion of a Library to a receptacle for claimants to patronage, their efforts were shattered against a record so unimpeachable, so straightforward and so conspicuously a part of a generation's progress. Mr. Putnam, impassive, irrepressibly dignified, and acutely silent, came from the experience untouched and unchanging. Said an editorial in the *New York Times*, "Happily it [i. e. the Library] is not in peril. The creditable course of Congress touching the nation's library gives assurance that nothing will be allowed to impair its efficiency or lessen its prestige among the great libraries of the world."

### *Librarian Emeritus*

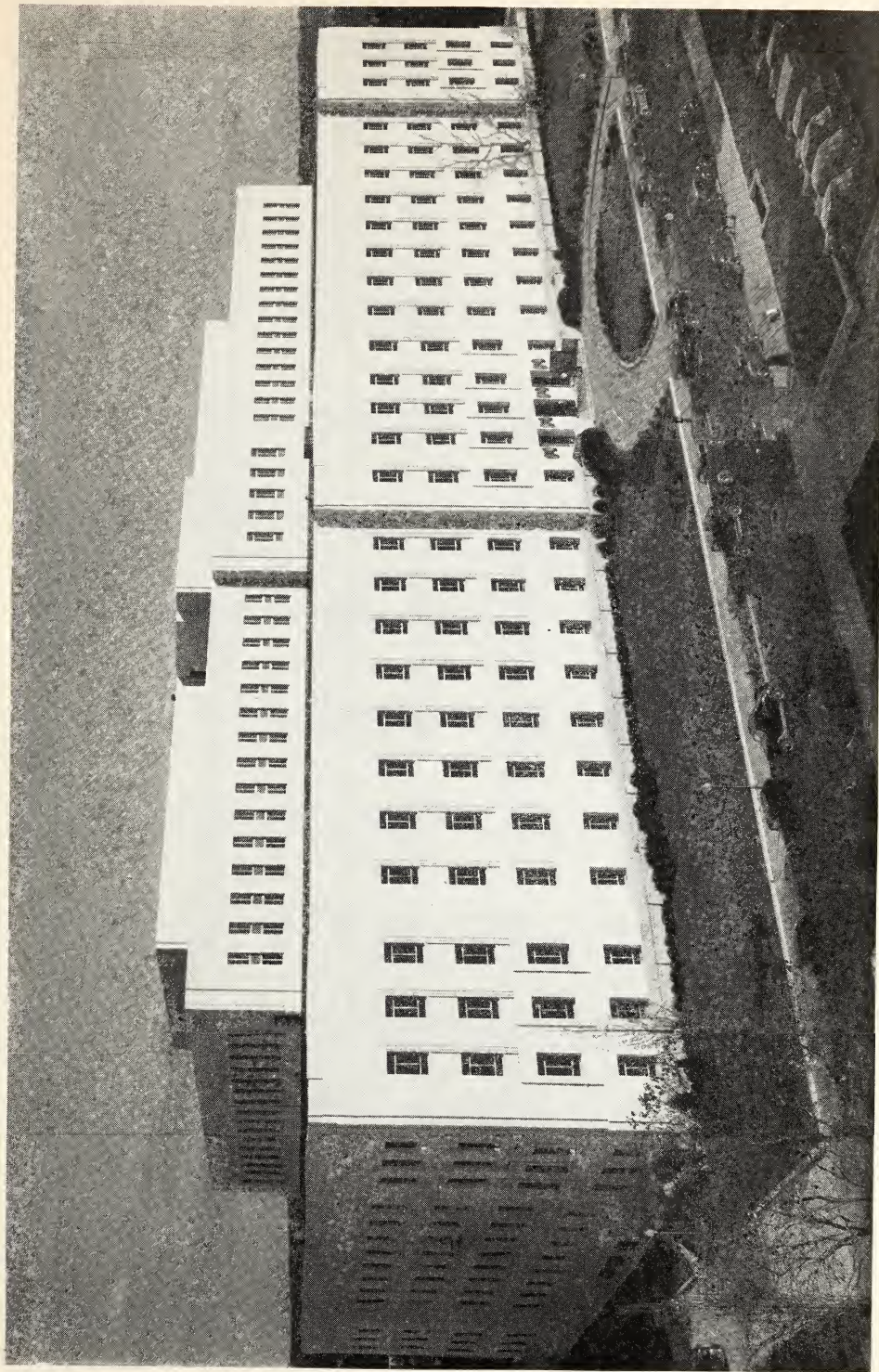
It was April 5, 1939, the fortieth anniversary of his incumbency. There had been distinguished guests at the Round Table, and afterward Mr. Putnam had escorted them through the tunnel to that

functional mass which was called the Annex. In the two reading rooms new reference books lined the recessed shelves, and already the public had resorted to them. It was the day of opening. Thirty-two years before Mr. Putnam had calmed the fears of legislators, alarmed, perhaps, at the extraordinary growth of the Library, with the consideration that "when the present building shall have received all of the shelving it may accommodate . . . storage shelving may be extended into plain, simple, inexpensive but appropriate buildings in the neighborhood. These structures would be almost solid masses of shelving and cost but little more than the shelving itself."

Over and over again the Library had found itself, like June, "bustin' out all over." A stack in the southeast courtyard had been erected in 1909, and another in the northeast in 1927; the Coolidge Auditorium had been constructed in the northwest. Books had been packed in boxes and stored in cellars. If the Library did not present the appearance of the "iron room" in the Capitol during the last years of the nineteenth century, it was only because there were now more recesses and more strips of steel on which to "double-shelve" collections. But the situation had been intolerable.

The first move toward the erection of an Annex was made when the Honorable Robert Luce, chairman of the House Committee on the Library, introduced a bill on January 16, 1928, for the acquisition of ground to the east of the Library. Another bill, approved June 13, 1930, appropriated \$6,500,000 for the construction of an Annex, for a tunnel connecting it with the Main building's eastern front, including provision for a Rare Book room and the Union Catalog. By an act approved June 6, 1935, the total provision for the Annex and tunnel was increased to \$8,226,457.75, not including the cost of





*The Annex Building, erected at a cost of over \$8,000,000, was opened to the public in 1939. (Photo by Horydczak, October 1938)*





ground which amounted to an additional \$917,801. David Lynn, Architect of the Capitol, commissioned Messrs. Pierson and Wilson, of Washington, as architects, and Alexander G. Trowbridge as consulting architect of the building. The actual construction was awarded, on the basis of competitive bids, to the Consolidated Engineering Company, of Baltimore. The building, five stories in height above ground, rectangular, with the fifth story set back thirty-five feet, contained, on the three lower floors, office or work space to a depth of thirty-five feet around the periphery, the fourth floor was given over to storage, while the fifth, in its entirety was devoted to the use of readers, but below that level the whole central core was composed of bookstacks. It was said that they would accommodate 10,000,000 volumes or their equivalent in other forms of material.

For Mr. Putnam the opening of the Annex was more than an event, important in itself; it was the culmination of forty years of persevering attention to the development, care and exploitation of the Nation's literary resource. In a very real sense he had built them both; the glaring, white edifice, and the great collections which it would house. "The 'story' of an executive absorbed in his job," he had recently written, "is in the main the story of the institution he is administering;" and in the "story" of the Library of Congress the letters in which his name was written were large and bold and indelible. Even a man so modest might take pride in this.

Almost a year before, on June 20, 1938, Mr. Roosevelt had approved Public Law No. 686, providing "That upon separation from the service, by resignation or otherwise, on or after July 1, after the approval of this Act, Herbert Putnam, the present Librarian of Congress, who has served in that office for thirty-nine years, shall become Librarian Emeritus, with such duties

as the President of the United States may prescribe, and the President of the United States shall thereupon appoint his successor, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate."

While the legislation in preliminary form had been under consideration, during the first session of the Seventy-fifth Congress the chairman of the House Committee on the Library had said that Mr. Putnam had "built the world's greatest research library—our great National Library—which serves and is served by the world," and in the final report the chairman had said substantially the same thing: "He has built the world's outstanding research library—the Congressional Library, which serves and is served by the world and which service shall be greatly extended." And now, on April 5, 1939, the law was on the statute books but nothing had happened.

Nothing did happen until June 7 and a few days after June 29, Mr. Putnam went to New York to have lunch with the poet. As *The Library Journal* put it, "the long period of conjecture had ended."

### *The Brush of the Comet*

President Roosevelt, on June 7, 1939, sent to the Senate the nomination of Archibald MacLeish as successor to Mr. Putnam in the office of Librarian of Congress. The appointment was confirmed by the Senate on June 29. Meanwhile, however, the American Library Association was meeting in annual conference at San Francisco. The profession, while readily admitting "his rank as one of the four great contemporary American poets, his administrative ability, and his scholarship," was, nevertheless, at once outraged and chastened by the selection of a man without previous training and experience. Not since William McKinley had chosen John Russell Young for the same post, had organized librarianship been either so indig-



nant or so embarrassed. The Association's president, Milton J. Ferguson, immediately after the close of the first session, sent to the Chief Executive a letter, subscribed with fourteen hundred signatures, which began: "We think that the confirmation of Mr. Archibald MacLeish as librarian of Congress would be a calamity." Continuing it bristled with such phrases as these:

Mr. MacLeish could not qualify for the librarianship of any college or public library in America which attempts to maintain professional standards . . . He most certainly is not qualified to be librarian of the largest and most important library in the world . . . The appointment of a man as a figure-head would do no honor to the appointee . . . If any senator thinks that the American Library Association may not fully represent all library opinion, he is respectfully urged to solicit the opinions of librarians and members of library boards in his own state.

It was, therefore, inevitable that the debate in the Senate should be bitter and acrimonious and unpleasant, but confirmation came with an overwhelming vote of sixty-four to eight. Looking back on the situation as it then existed, and recalling the thunderous and spontaneous personal ovation which Mr. MacLeish received at another conference of the Association, this time at Milwaukee, on June 26, 1942, when he was introduced by another president as the best friend of American libraries, and where he addressed a great audience, saying "our scholars' country is a country we must fight to save"—remembering the two occasions, contrasting them, and recalling that the participants involved were identical, it is impossible to escape the conviction that he had somehow worked a minor miracle.

Born at Glencoe, Illinois, May 7, 1892, the son of Andrew and Martha (Hillard) MacLeish, he attended Hotchkiss School, later going to Yale where he graduated in 1915. His class book reported that "MacLeish expects to take up the study of

literature." Instead he took up the study of law at Harvard. In the summer of 1917, he interrupted his studies, enlisted as a private in the Yale Mobile Hospital Unit, went overseas and was promptly made a sergeant. Fretting because of the inactivity of his command, then stationed at Limoges, he secured a discharge and enlisted in the Field Artillery. Following a course at Saumur, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in February 1918, and after an interval spent in a French tractor school, he was assigned to Battery B of the 146th Field Artillery, and saw service at the front in the second Battle of the Marne. In August 1918, he was promoted to first lieutenant, and ordered to return to this country as an instructor in the training camps. At Camp Meade, near Washington, he was attached to the 33d Field Artillery as operations officer. In October 1918, he was promoted to captain, and shortly thereafter became adjutant to the officer in command of the Yale R. O. T. C. Discharged from the Army in February 1919, he returned to Harvard and the study of law where he served on the board of the Harvard Law Review; he received the degree of LL. B. *cum laude* the following autumn, and was awarded the Fay diploma. From 1919 to 1921 Mr. MacLeish was an instructor in government at Harvard. In September 1920, he began the practice of law in the office of Choate, Hall & Stewart, in Boston, where he "did pretty well, but couldn't write," because of professional preoccupations. While practicing law he taught in night schools and wrote the educational section of *Time* which had just commenced publication.

In the winter of 1923, conscious of "only one desire—to write the poems I wanted to write and not the poems I was writing" he went to Paris to live, read the French poets, made a pilgrimage to Persia, and after five years returned to a farm at Conway, Massachusetts. Carl Sandburg once

said: "I am not sure what an authentic poet is, but I know Archibald MacLeish is one." In the winter of 1929-30 he began his association with *Fortune*, to which he became a contributing editor. This was followed by the curatorship of the Nieman Foundation for Contemporary Journalism at Harvard University.

Mr. MacLeish assumed the office of Librarian of Congress, on Monday morning, October 2, 1939. Meanwhile, the American Library Association had been reconciled to his coming. The newly-elected president, Ralph Munn, had written to pledge support: "For the Association, and for myself, I wish you well in your new duties;" Mr. MacLeish had replied with assurances of cooperation and the "hope that all those concerned with the present cultural crisis of our civilization, and aware of the part libraries must play in that crisis, may work together for the common end."

It is difficult to reconstruct those early days. They were, of course so recent, yet already they seem ineffably remote. The staff sensed at once that the new chief possessed unusual personal qualities, a first-rate mind, which absorbed and penetrated and understood; energies that could be at once, exhausting, graceful and yet dynamic; marked powers of concentration and a concern for rationalization; an insistence on definition; and a gift of expression beyond any similar gift they had ever known. And the staff was aware also of abilities as an administrator. But he was (and is) a poet, and it was not always possible to know at once in which capacity he confronted his subordinates. His drive was tremendous, and the fresh air that he brought with him was invigorating. Working with Archibald MacLeish was almost never easy, but it was almost always fun. His spirit of mission was contagious; he gave libraries (and particularly his own Library) a conscious-

ness of new duties and new responsibility.

A reminder is necessary: Mr. MacLeish took office just one month after the Nazi army had invaded Poland, but for many many months before, the world had been in tension. It was obvious that some monstrous threat hung over the world and that threat was the evil growth of fascism. The reminder is necessary to understand the reasons which impelled Mr. MacLeish to become Librarian of Congress.

Two weeks after taking office, Mr. MacLeish made this perfectly clear in an address on Founder's Day at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. Everyone, he said, had asked "why on earth did you take a job as librarian which will leave you little or no time for your own work?" There was, however, "a question under this question, or within this question, or behind this question," which he would "like to try to answer."

It is a question addressed not to me, but to all men of responsibility. And it is a question which concerns not a particular librarian, but the librarians of the nation.

Our age, as many men have noticed, is an age characterized by the tyranny of time. Never more than at this moment was that tyranny evident. Those of us who are concerned, for whatever reason, with the preservation of the civilization and the inherited culture of this nation find ourselves in a situation in which time is running out, not like sand in a glass, but like the blood in an opened artery. There is still time left to us. But we can foresee clearly the moment when there will be none. . . .

We face a situation which has an "either" and which has an "or", and we will choose or fail to choose between them. . . . For the failure to choose in the world we live in is in itself a choice. The "either" as I see it, is the education of the people of this country. The "or" is fascism. We will either educate the people of this Republic to know and therefore to value and therefore to preserve their own democratic culture or we will watch the people of this Republic trade their democratic culture for the nonculture, the obscurantism, the superstition, the brutality, the tyranny which is overrunning eastern and central and southern Europe. . . .



These are the alternatives our time presents us. They are not alternatives which will remain forever open. We may accept them now or lose them now. "History," says Wystan Auden,

History to the defeated

May say Alas, but cannot help or pardon.

History can say Alas to this American civilization of ours as well as to any other. Unless we save it. Unless we act, not only with our words but with our minds, to save it.

And at that present moment librarians were not "opening that knowledge and that understanding to the citizens of the republic." Here was the clue to the opportunity which had captured his imagination and his talent. Librarians as the custodians of the cultural heritage of the people had an obligation not only to preserve but to proclaim it, to make it understood. The profession was to move from a passive to an affirmative position. It was time to apply the educative process.

Now it should not for a moment be assumed that this concern for ideologies, this impulse to teach, this determination to arouse an understanding of issue, was permitted to divert him from his responsibilities as executive. On the contrary, he took prompt measures to reorganize and reorient the administrative structure. Of the measures he took, the counsel he sought to find, the best account is his own, published in *The Library Quarterly* for October 1944, subsequently off-printed as a separate, and reprinted as an annex to the Annual Report for fiscal 1945. There is, therefore, no reason and no excuse for its reproduction here. But a few quotations are inevitable. First, his interpretation of the situation as he found it:

. . . to succeed Mr. Putnam was a good deal like inheriting an enormous house at Stockbridge or Bar Harbor from a wise, well-loved, strong-minded, charming and particular uncle who knew where everything was and how everything worked and what everyone could do but had left no indications in his will.

My first reaction to the Library of Congress—and my last may well be the same—was the conviction that I owed it to my successor to leave him with an organization with a momentum of its own. The principal difficulty with the old Library, from my point of view, as the unexpected and unexpectant heir, was the fact that the whole fabric depended from the Librarian as the miraculous architecture of the paper wasp hangs from a single anchor . . .

Moreover, he entertained throughout his tenure serious doubts "that the administration of a library differs essentially from the administration of any other organization in which highly developed skills and highly developed personalities are combined in a highly complicated undertaking." A few months after his appointment he had summoned a group of eminent authorities to review the situation, and they had, "in the chill vocabulary of the science of management" called it:

in all probability the largest and most diffused span of control to be found in any American library . . . Small wonder that the Library of Congress is often described as a group of libraries within a library. It is in effect a loose federation of principalities, each with strongly developed traditions and with administrative and technical idiosyncrasies. . . . There can be little doubt that the steady expansion of the number of independent organization units is in large measure responsible for many of the present difficulties in technical operations as well as in administration of the Library. Almost of necessity, each division has made its own decisions as to the technical apparatus of catalogs, shelflists and indexes it has devised and as to its relations to the processing operations of the rest of the Library. It is not surprising that a considered program for the institution as a whole has not been developed.

He had begun with overhauling the fiscal operations. "Five highly competent investigators from the General Accounting Office" had been called in. They had gone to work in the fall of 1939, but had been unable to file a final report until 1942. But as a business office, the Library was now on a sound and acceptable basis. He had combined the functions of several

personnel offices. He had appointed committees to advise him on processing, card distribution, acquisitions policy, and reference and custodial services. He had combined divisions performing similar or related duties into departments, had separated conflicting functions, abolished some administrative units and had created others. He had organized staff participation groups, established standing interdepartmental committees on acquisitions, processing, and bibliography and publications, provided modern and equitable and open grievance procedures, conducted "the Library's central administration through the Librarian's Conference, a daily meeting of department heads and principal administrative officers," where policy decisions were debated and in which "principal administrative decision are made." And he concluded this paper, published just two months prior to his departure from the Library, which is, therefore in essence valedictory, with these words:

I hope and believe it has provided a sensible, orderly, and manageable structure, strong enough to support the great future of which the Library of Congress is so manifestly capable—whatever else the reorganization of the Library has accomplished, it has given, I trust, an increasing number of men and women the sense of participating creatively and responsibly in a work which all of them may well feel proud to share.

If it has done that, I shall feel that my five years as Librarian of Congress, meager as their accomplishment must necessarily seem by comparison with the great decades which went before, were not without their value to an institution I have learned not only to respect but love.

This was a document of administration. But perhaps as important as any statement of his career was the statement of *policy*, which governed the operation and aspiration of the institution throughout the years it was in his charge. No record, however informal, which seeks to trace the progress of the Library in time, can omit its full presentation:

## OBJECTIVES OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

### 1. Maintenance of the Collections

The objectives of the Library of Congress with regard to the character of its collections are defined by the fact that the collections of the Library are available for the use of three categories of users: first, the members of the Congress; second, officers of the Federal Government and the staffs of the various government departments and agencies including the Supreme Court and its Bar; and, third, the general public—all comes from all places. Since it is impossible for the Library to "collect everything," selection of books must be made upon the basis of the anticipated needs of these three classes of users in the order given. To this end the Library adopts three Canons of Selection. They apply to the Library's acquisition of materials by purchase, not to its acquisition by gift or by deposit for copyright.

1. *The library of Congress should possess in some useful form all bibliothecal materials necessary to the Congress and to the officers of government of the United States in the performance of their duties.*

To this Canon only one exception is made. A large number of special libraries have been established in the various departments, bureaus, and offices of government as, for example, the Department of Agriculture, the Office of the Surgeon General of the Army, etc. Where the collections of these libraries adequately cover particular fields in which the Library of Congress is not strong, the Library of Congress will not purchase extensively in these fields but will limit itself to the principal reference works, using its best efforts to strengthen the collections already established elsewhere.

Where, however, the collections of the Library are already exceptionally strong they will be maintained regardless of holdings in other libraries. The Reference Department of the Library of Congress will make it its business to know the extent of the collections of these special libraries and will establish, with the librarians in charge, machinery for cooperation both in the maintenance of these collections and in their use.



This first Canon of Selection suggests the second. The Government of the United States is a representative government representing the people, and its property, including its books, is the property of the people. Subject, therefore, to their use by officers of government in the performance of their duties, the collections of the Library of Congress are for the use of the people of the United States and should contain the materials of principal importance to the people of the United States in their study of themselves and their past. The second Canon, therefore, is:

2. *The Library of Congress should possess all books and other materials (whether in original or copy), which express and record the life and achievements of the people of the United States.*

To this Canon there is one obvious exception. Where official records of the Federal Government are deposited in the National Archives the Library will secure only such copies as are necessary for the convenience of its readers. It will, however, attempt to secure all printed documents, federal, state, and municipal.

Again the Library's principal concern here is with national rather than local records, and though it recognizes that many so-called local records are, or may become, of national significance (as, for example, local histories of which it has a distinguished collection) the emphasis of its effort is upon records of national interest, and its primary concern as regards local manuscript records is to stimulate their collection in appropriate localities.

These two Canons are the controlling Canons governing the choice of books for the collections of the Library of Congress. They must be satisfied first both in order of time and in order of money. They do not, however, exhaust the book-buying interests of the Library. No people is isolated either in space or in time, and no civilization is autonomous. To understand their own records, the people of the United States must understand what went before and what exists elsewhere. The written records of European civilization are their concern as are also the records of Asiatic and African civilization and the records of the civilization of the Americas. The people of the United States are a people of many pasts, being a people of many origins, and these pasts are a part of their common past. The third Canon of Selection is therefore:

3. *The Library of Congress should possess, in some useful form, the material parts of the records of other societies, past and present, and should accumulate, in original or in copy, full and representative collections of the written records of those societies and peoples whose experience is of most immediate concern, to the people of the United States.*

Two exceptions to the third Canon should be noted. First, the Library of Congress as the central United States depository for the publications of all foreign governments will attempt to secure all the official publications of all governments of the world. Second, where, aside from such official documents, other American libraries, whose collections are made broadly available, have already accumulated, or are in process of accumulating, outstanding collections in well-defined areas, in which areas the Library of Congress is not strong, the Library of Congress will satisfy itself with general reference materials and will not attempt to establish intensive collections.

The third Canon, it will be noted, is not only deferred in time and money but is also limited in scope. Where the Library will attempt to secure (with the exceptions noted) *all* bibliothecal materials needed by officers of government, and *all* records of the national life and the national achievements of the American people, it will attempt to secure, under this third Canon of Selection, only such materials as are clearly important to a general understanding. That a "value judgment" is thus required is not an objection. Librarians, no more than other living men, can avoid the necessity of choice and decision. The scholars, Consultants and Fellows of the Library of Congress will be called upon, in all recommendations of books, to make selections on one basis or another and the fact that the basis of selection here will require a more discriminating exercise of judgment will not deter them.

## 2. *Service of the Collections*

The same considerations, or nearly so, govern the policies and objectives of the Library as an agency of research and reference work. Most research or reference libraries differ from the Library of Congress not only in the people they serve but in their methods of service. That is to say that most research or reference libraries maintain collections of materials for the use of such readers as may care to consult them, the library's function

being exclusively to secure the material, keep it up to date and make it available to readers who may come to the library, the labor of research and the responsibility for the organization of the material and its preparation for use being the reader's. This is not true of the Library of Congress in its relation to its principal obligations. The Library of Congress, as has been noted, exists primarily to serve the needs of Members of the Congress and thereafter the needs of officers of government generally. Not all Members of the Congress and officers of government have time to engage in their own search of the collections. Reference work essential to the performance of their duties must often be done for them and at their direction.

The reference services of the Library of Congress are, therefore, not only more extensive but different in kind from the reference services of other libraries. They are, and must be, manned by trained research and reference workers able to consult the Library's collections on behalf of Members of the Congress and officers of government whose duties require recourse to those collections. It is for this reason that the Library of Congress maintains in its Reference Department, its Division of Documents, its Legislative Reference Service, its Law Library, and its special reference units, such as the Social Sciences Reference Room, the Division of Aeronautics, the Division of Orientalia, the Hispanic Foundation, the Division of Maps, of Manuscripts, of Fine Arts, etc., a large staff of persons trained in scholarly work. And it is this reason which determines the Library's reference and research objectives. These are:

1. *The Library of Congress undertakes for Members of the Congress any and all research and reference projects bearing upon the Library's collections and required by Members in connection with the performance of their legislative duties.*

There are no exceptions to this rule so far as the Library's conception of its obligations is concerned. Only a lack of means to provide the necessary, and necessarily skilled, staff will justify a failure on the Library's part to meet all such demands.

2. *The Library of Congress undertakes for officers and departments of government research projects, appropriate to the Library, which can be executed by reference to its collections, and which the staffs of offices and departments are unable to execute.*

These projects are deferred, except in case of emergency, to reference projects undertaken for Members of the Congress.

The rules establishing the Library's reference and research obligations to Members of the Congress and officers of government suggest, in turn, its reference obligations to other libraries and to the public in general. As in the case of its collections, the reference facilities of the Library are facilities created for the use of Members of the Congress, etc., as representatives of the people and are therefore the facilities of the people. For this reason, but subject to the priorities established by the greater urgency of the research needs of Members of the Congress and officers of government, the reference facilities of the Library are available, within appropriate limitations, to members of the public acting either through universities or learned societies or other libraries or directly. The "pool of scholarship" which the Library of Congress is obliged to maintain in order to perform its obligations to the Congress and to the government is, in other words, as much the property of the people as its collection of books. These facts determine the third rule defining the reference objectives of the Library.

3. *The reference staff and facilities of the Library of Congress are available to members of the public, universities, learned societies and other libraries requiring services which the Library staff is equipped to give and which can be given without interference with services to the Congress and other agencies of the Federal Government.*

This policy is active as well as passive. Passively considered it means that reference inquiries, and requests for bibliothecal service, which cannot be satisfied by other libraries or scholarly institutions nearer the inquirer, may be submitted to the Library of Congress which will respond to them within necessary limitations of time and labor. Actively considered the Library's policy in this regard means that the Library of Congress, as the reference library of the people, holds itself charged with a duty to provide information to the people with regard to the materials they possess in its collections, and with an obligation to make its technical and scholarly services as broadly useful to the people as it can.



To this latter end it has established its Union Catalog which, when completed, will serve as a finding catalog for books in any American library, its photoduplication service, which will supply scholars anywhere with copies of materials in its collections, its Archive of American Folk Song which preserves, and its Phonoduplication Service which provides copies of, the folk music of the country, its inter-library loan service which provides books or photocopies from its collections to scholars unable to consult them on its shelves, its Card Division which sells copies of its catalog cards to other libraries at incalculable savings to them of time, staff, building-space and other costs, its cooperative catalog service and many other comparable aids to libraries, universities, private scholars, and the general public. The natural extension of these services as necessity arises (in such directions, for example, as an archive of photocopies and phonocopies, a center of information as to photoduplicating undertakings in progress, a bibliographic center providing information as to bibliographic undertakings in progress, an index of special collections, etc.) is a proper Library objective and one which will increase its usefulness as a clearing house for scholarly information and a point of departure for cooperative undertakings aimed at the advancement of American culture and the enrichment of the resources of American scholarship.

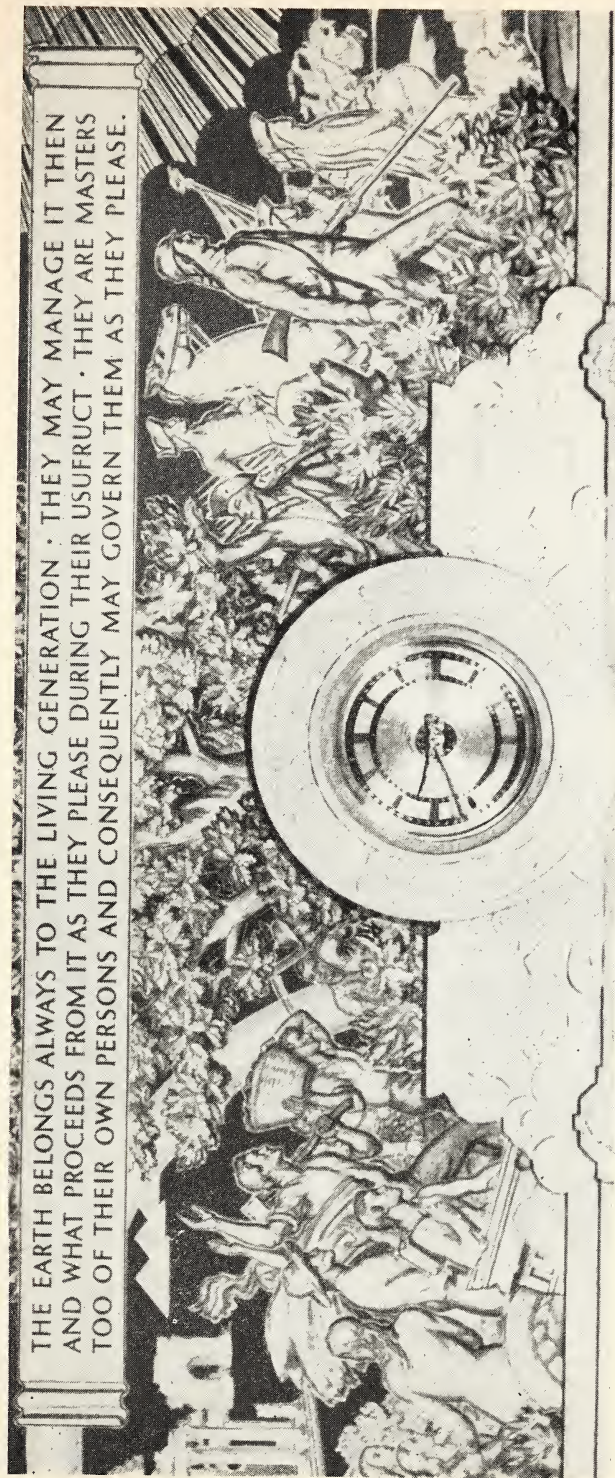
The extensions of the Library's services in these directions have been made possible in the past largely by gifts from Foundations and interested individuals. The continuation of such gifts and grants over the past fiscal year is a source of gratification.

Throughout the period of the emergency and the outbreak which followed, Mr. MacLeish shaped the Library to the Nation's purpose. Its relations to other offices of the Government, and particularly its relation to those offices directly engaged in the prosecution of the war, were made intimate and active. Members of the Library staff assisted in establishing the libraries of new agencies. A representative was sent to Europe to procure the publications necessary to the conduct of the war abroad, and on the sea, and in the air, and even here at home. A division for the study of propaganda analysis was established. What later became the Re-

search and Analysis Branch of the Office of Strategic Services was first set up as the Division of Special Information in the Library of Congress. A civilian defense collection was organized. A War Agencies Collection gave duly accredited representatives of the Government access to materials which, for reasons of security, had to be withheld from the public. The Library's most precious possessions were evacuated to places of protective storage. The Library's entire bibliographical staff was devoted to the preparation of lists requested by those in command of the conduct of the struggle. The regional divisions, Orientalia, Hispanic and Slavic were more importantly, more critically, and more quantitatively used than ever before. The collection of maps was put to intensive uses. The study rooms filled up with Federal personnel. Exhibits, broadcasts, lectures were designed to reflect the war aims of the United States. The Legislative Reference Service inaugurated a series of *War Service Bulletins* and *Guides to Current Materials*. Cultural interchange was maintained with friendly powers.

The testing was severe. Out of it came proof of unsuspected lacunae. Deficiencies were conspicuous in collections formerly believed to be adequate for any cause. The lack of specialists for the interpretation of materials in certain fields placed the national interest in jeopardy. Out of this, there grew upon the administrators of the Library a grim determination to lay at the first opportunity its case before Congress, set forth its needs as tragedy had marked them, and propose a plan which would, whether in war or peace, prevent recurrence.

Mr. MacLeish was frequently absent, sometimes for extended periods, first as director of the Office of Facts and Figures, subsequently as assistant director of the Office of War Information. In London,



One of the murals by Ezra Winter in the Thomas Jefferson Room, depicting scenes based upon quotations from the works of the Library's "founder". The Jefferson murals were dedicated on December 15, 1941, in ceremonies which, appropriately, also commemorated the sesquicentennial anniversary of the adoption of the Bill of Rights.





he attended the conferences of the Allied Ministers of Education out of which would one day come a proposal for an office to be attached to the United Nations Organization having as its province the diffusion of education, science, and culture.

He was a public figure, and because he was a public figure the Library of Congress, formerly almost deliberately anonymous, a little drab and taken for granted, was found to possess engaging and interesting values for the public press. There were more references to the Library in the *New York Times* between 1939 and 1944 than had appeared in the preceding thirteen years. Mr. MacLeish was the "front-line Librarian," and the Library was variously described as the Arsenal of Democracy, the City of the Mind, the Fortress of Freedom, and by other high-sounding hyperboles. On December 19, 1944, he resigned to become Assistant Secretary of State. Perhaps the reason for his going was the reason which first had brought him to the Library: "We will either educate the people of this Republic to know, and therefore to value and therefore to preserve their own democratic culture, or we will watch the people of this Republic trade their democratic culture for the nonculture, the obscurantism, the superstition, the brutality, the tyranny which is overrunning eastern and central and southern Europe." He had been given a voice. In his new office he would have opportunity to raise it in a cause common to his countrymen.

It was said at the time that the President had written him, saying in substance he was glad Mr. MacLeish was not leaving Washington for good but merely exchanging one mausoleum for another, and that Mr. MacLeish had replied with a reminder that "a rolling stone gathers no Mausoleum." And when he had gone it was said in this place: "the brush of the comet gave a new dimension to the Library." And that was so. It had become a cultural institution great among the great cultural institutions of the world. It could maintain that position.

The remainder of this account must be brief. On June 18, 1945, almost six months to the day following Mr. MacLeish's resignation, the President nominated as his successor the man whom Mr. MacLeish had appointed first as Director of the Legislative Reference Service and later as Chief Assistant Librarian. Eleven days later the nomination was confirmed without dissent by the Senate, and on June 30, 1945, Luther Harris Evans took the oath of office which made him the tenth Librarian of Congress.

This, then, has been the story up to now. From beginnings modest and humble and even unsuspecting, the Library of Congress has become a powerful influence in the affairs of government and in the lives of the people of the United States. Its future, as a future must be, is uncertain. But it will be a march as it has always been. And the story will be the American story.





# Index

## A

- A. L. A. Catalog, 8000 Volumes for a Popular Library, With Notes*, 181.  
*A. L. A. List of 5000 Best Books for a Model Library*, 181.  
*A. L. A. Portrait Index*, 181.  
*Across the Busy Years*, 165.  
 Acquisitions policy, 211-212.  
 Adams, Henry, 168.  
 Adams, James Truslow, 205-206.  
 Adams, John, 3, 6, portrait, 59.  
 Adams, John Quincy, memoirs, 37.  
 Adler, Cyrus, 127.  
 Aeronautics Division, 202.  
 Agriculture, Department of, 142, 190.  
 Alabama Polytechnic Institute, 144.  
 Alcott, Bronson, 78.  
 Alger, Russell A., 152.  
 Allen, Edward, 70, 75.  
 Allen, Ira, 14.  
*Allgemeine Zeitung*, 127.  
 Allied Ministers of Education, 215.  
 Allinson, David, 36.  
 Alston, Willis, 24.  
 Alvord, Thomas Gold, Jr., 143, 166.  
 American Antiquarian Society, 127.  
*American Archives*, 106, 112.  
*American Editor*, 36.  
 American Historical Association, 145, 177, 183, 191.  
 American Jewish Historical Society, 144.  
 American Library Association, 130-131, 141, 144, 147, 166, 172, 181, 203, 207.  
 American Printing House for the Blind, 153-154.  
 American Social Science Association, 117.  
 Anagnos, Michael, 154.  
 Anderson, Robert, 37.  
 Andrews, Charles M., 183.  
 Appropriations, 1791, 6-7; 1800, 8; 1802, 10-11; 1806, 13; 1814, 16; 1815, 16-20; 1816, 28; 1824, 32-34; 1828, 35; 1832, 40; 1852, 63; 1861, 85; 1864, 75; 1865, 87; 1867, 108; 1870, 94, 96-97; 1876, 109-110; 1879, 123, 155; 1882, 110; 1886, 122, 124; 1896, 125, 130; 1897, 133-134; 1898, 156; 1900, 173; 1901, 175; 1904, 179; 1909-10, 176; 1922, 192; 1924, 192; 1928, 205; 1930, 206-207.

- Architecture. Capitol, 73; Library, 122; White House, 27, 61.  
*Around the World with General Grant*, 137.  
 Art gallery, 141, 143.  
 Arthur, Chester Alan, 137.  
 Asakawa, Dr. Kan-Ichi, 185.  
 Ashley, Frederick W., 87.  
 Atlanta Carnegie Library, 178.  
 Audubon's *Birds of America*, 62.

## B

- Babine, Alexis V., 184, 202.  
 Bacon, Francis H., 92.  
 Baker, George H., 126, 130, 132.  
 Baldwin, Abraham, 12.  
 Bancroft, George, 107.  
 Bandouine, C. A., 66, 69.  
 Barbier, Charles, 153.  
 Barrell, George G., 34, 59.  
 Barrows, Samuel June, 166-168.  
 Bayard, James Asheton, 6, 10.  
 Bayard, Thomas F., 114.  
 Beard, James H., 77.  
 Beckley, John James, Librarian of Congress (1802-1807), appointed librarian, 11; death, 15.  
 Bede, The Venerable, 53.  
 Beecher, Henry Ward, 145.  
 Beethoven Association, 200.  
 Belden, Charles F. D., 170.  
 Bell, M. Fred, 166.  
 Benedict, Seth W., 78.  
 Benjamin, William Evarts, 202.  
 Benton, Maecenas Eason, 55.  
 Bergen, Garret, 96.  
 Bergen's Almanac-Calendar, 96.  
 Biagi, Guido, 178.  
 Bibliography, 178, 189, 194, 211-214.  
 Binding, 171.  
 Bingham, Henry Harrison, 130, 151, 185.  
 Bingham, William, 8.  
 Blackwell, Henry B., 67, 79, 83.  
 Blades, William, 3.  
 Blind, books for, 153-155.  
 Blodget, Samuel, 27.  
 Blodget's Hotel, 30.  
 Blount, James Henderson, 125.  
 Bodleian Library (Oxford), 183.  
 Bodoni Press, 47.



Bolivar, Simon, 59, 63.  
 Book sellers, England, 9, 33, 65, 70; France, 50;  
     United States, 14, 51, 65, 70.  
 Bookplates, 27.  
 Books for the Adult Blind Division, 153-155.  
 Borrowers, 1800-1867, 74.  
 Bossange, Paul, 70.  
 Boston Athenaeum, 145.  
*Boston Independent Chronicle*, 3.  
 Boston Public Library, 95, 101, 145, 169.  
 Botanic Gardens, 175.  
 Boutwell, George S., 136.  
 Bowker, Richard Rogers, 202.  
 Boyd, Lynn, 61.  
 Boynton, Henry Van Ness, 166.  
 Braille, 154-155.  
 Braille, Louis, 153.  
 Breckenridge, John Cabell, 80.  
 Brett, William Howard, 132, 177.  
 Briesen, A. von, 96.  
 British Museum, 31, 46, 75, 93-95, 123, 157,  
     179, 183.  
 Broglie, Duc de, 54.  
*Brooklyn Eagle*, 154.  
 Brooklyn Public Library, 178.  
 Brown, John Carter, 101.  
 Brussels Convention for International Exchange  
     of Documents, Scientific and Literary Publica-  
     tions, 104.  
 Bryan, Charles Page, 151.  
 Budget estimates, 173.  
 Burke, Aedanus, 1.  
 Burnet, Robert W., 81.  
 Burrall, Jonathan, 13.  
*Bursting of Pierre Margry's La Salle Bubble*, 109.  
 Butler, Nicholas Murray, 165.  
 Buturlin, Dimitrii Petrovich, 44.  
 Buturlin Collection, 44-48.

## C

Cadell and Davies, 9.  
 Caleb Cushing Collection, 168.  
 Calhoun, John C., 30.  
 Call, Wilkinson, 132.  
 Cambreling, Churchill Caldom, 54.  
 Cameron, Elizabeth, 168.  
 Campbell, Helen Mary, 154.  
 Canfield, James H., 165-166.  
 Cannon, Newton, 20.  
 Capitol, 15, 25, 34, 59-64, 82, 103, 116, 119-122;  
     fires, 1814, 15, 25; 1825, 34; 1851, 59-64;  
     1898, 116, 119-122; library, 82, 103.  
*Capitol at Washington*, 69.  
 Card Distribution, 129, 174-178, 214.

*Care of Manuscripts*, 144.  
 Carlisle, John Griffin, 125.  
 Carnegie Corporation, Recording Laboratory,  
     201-202.  
 Carnegie Institution, Bureau of Historical Re-  
     search, 183.  
 Carpenter, Matthew Hale, 96.  
 Carroll, Daniel, 131.  
 Carson, John M., 166.  
 Cass, Lewis, 54.  
 Catalogs, 17, 27-28, 58, 61, 85, 108, 117-118;  
     125, 162, 183; Jefferson, 17, 61; 1815, "classed  
     catalog", 27-28; 1864, alphabetical author, 85;  
     1878, author catalog, 118; 1898, author  
     manuscript, 162.  
*Catalogue Index of Manuscripts in the Archives of*  
*England, France, Holland and Spain relating to*  
*America, 1763-1783*, 183.  
*Catalogue of Publications of Societies, and other Periodi-*  
*cal Works in the Library of the Smithsonian Institu-*  
*tion*, 103.  
*Catalogue of the Library of Congress (1861) Index of*  
*Subjects*, 117.  
*Century*, 142.  
 Ceracchi, Giuseppe, 59.  
 Chairs, 203.  
 Chang, Li Hung, 137.  
*Chapter in the Unwritten History of the Library of*  
*Congress*, 165-166.  
*Charleston City Gazette*, 1.  
 Chase, Salmon P., 71, 77.  
*Chicago Herald*, 146.  
 Chicago Public Library, 155.  
 Chile, exchange of publications, 105.  
 Chinese Literature, 161-162, 168, 186, 188.  
 Choate, Rufus, 36, 99-101.  
*Cincinnati Commercial*, 79-82.  
 Cincinnati Public Library, 178.  
 Civil Service Commission, 130, 141, 192-193.  
 Civil War, 74, 81, 85-86.  
 Civilian Defense Collection, 214.  
 Clagett and Dodson, 69.  
 Clark, Edward, 88, 122, 124.  
 Clark, L. F., 69.  
 Clark, Thomas H., 144, 161, 189.  
 Clarkson, James C. S., 166.  
 Classification, 28, 72, 126-127, 148, 162, 173, 178;  
     Jefferson, 28, 148; Meehan, 72; Spofford, 126-  
     127; Young, 162; Putnam, 173, 178.  
 Clay, Henry, 14, 29-30, 36, 48.  
 Clay, Joseph, 14.  
 Cleveland, Grover, 125, 134.  
 Cleveland Public Library, 177, 178.  
 Coddington, Hester, 180.  
 Collamer, Jacob, 86, 90.

- Collections, growth of, 1836, 45; 1861, 72; 1863, 73, 85; 1865-1870, 87; copyrights, 92, 87-88; Smithsonian Collection, 104; 1870, 108; 1896, 126; 1899, 171; 1928, 205; *see also* Exchange of Publications.
- Columbian Star*, 37.
- Columbus, Christopher, 34, 63.
- Concerts, 195-201.
- Congress. First Congress, 1-4; National Library proposed, 1790, 2; Library approved, 5-7; legislation for the Blind, 155; evening service provided for, 156-157; Legislative Reference Service established, 188; Hubbard Trust Fund accepted, 188; shrine for the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution provided, 192; Trust Fund Board established, 196, 198; Librarian's salary, 205; funds appropriated for Annex, 206-207; post of Librarian Emeritus created, 207.
- Congress. House Committee on the Library, 2-3, 6, 10-11, 15, 21, 23, 133, 151, 205-207.
- Congress. Joint Committee on the Library, 8, 10, 17-19, 29-31, 33, 35, 38, 38-42, 44-48, 52-55, 60-61, 62, 66, 85-88, 90-91, 94-99, 102, 104-105, 107-108, 109-110, 112-113, 122, 124-125, 128-130, 132, 155-156, 163, 188, 192, 205; first Committee appointed by Adams, 1800, 8; purchase of books and maps, 10; first charter, 1802, 10; Jefferson Library, 17-19; library location, 30; importations, 33-34; Librarian's visit to the other libraries, 38; Law Library, 38-42; Buturlin Collection rejected, 44-48; foreign exchange, 52-55, 104-105; fire inquiry, 1851, 60-61; remodeling of Library, 1852, 62-66; tribute to Chairman Pearce, 86-88; copyright law, 1867, 90-91; Librarian's position, 94-95; 148; sponsors bill to transfer labels, 99; Smithsonian Institution merger, 1866, 102; Peter Force Collection purchase, 108; manuscript department in new fireproof National Library Building suggested, 110; acceptance of Toner Collection recommended, 112-113; new building, 122-124; 126-127; Library's administration, policy and relationship to the Committee, 128-130; evening service, 136, 155-156; Hubbard Collection, 163; Coolidge Auditorium, 192; higher salaries, 205.
- Congress. Senate Committee on the Library, 4, 7, 10, 15, 30, 39-40, 48, 70, 133.
- Congress, Library Committees of, Reports, 14, 29, 92-94, 104, 110, 122, 124-125, 130, 133, 136, 147, 155, 205; 1808, 14; 1816, 29; 1867, 104; 1870, 92-94; 1876, 122; 1882, 110; 1886, 124-125; 1896, 130; 1897, 133, 136, 147, 155; 1928, 205.
- Conkling, Roscoe, 96.
- Constitution of the United States*, 192.
- Consultantships, 203-204.
- Contributions to Knowledge*, 101.
- Conway, Moncure D., 77-78.
- Cooke, Jay, 136.
- Coolidge, Elizabeth Sprague, *see* Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation.
- Coolidge Auditorium, 195-201, 206.
- Copenhagen, Library of, 46.
- Copyright, 51-52, 55-57, 87, 90-94, 97-98, 125, 128, 141, 143; author rights, 56; exchange of material, 52, 55; first Federal law, 1790, 56; deposits transferred from Department of the Interior to the Library of Congress, 97-98; foreign countries, 56; labels, 98-99; legislation, 51-52, 55-57 (1790), 87 (1865), 92-94 (1870), 98 (1874), 125 (1891, international copyright law); 128 (1897); volume of business, 97, 128, 143; weekly list of copyright entries for Treasury Department, 125.
- Copyright Office, 143, 171; arrears, 171; first Register, 143.
- Cortés, Hernán, 59, 63.
- Cowan, Edgar, 90.
- Cox, Samuel S., 123.
- Coxe, Richard, S., 36.
- Coxe, Tench, 14.
- Cranch, Edward P., 77.
- Creswell, John A. J., 89.
- Critic*, 142.
- Crittenden, John Jordan, 80.
- Cushing, Caleb, 161, 168.
- Cutter, William P., 180.
- D
- Daniel Guggenheim Fund, 202.
- Davis, Andres Jackson, 78.
- Davis, Cushman K., 142.
- Day, William R., 148.
- Debates and Proeedings in the Congress of the United States*, 2.
- "Debates, Resolutions and other Proceedings in Convention, on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution"*, 43.
- Declaration of Independence, 111, 192.
- De Kalb, Johann, 59.
- Della Cruscan Collection, 49.
- Delmano, the painter, 69.
- Denver Public Library, 178.
- Descriptive Catalogue of Government Publications of the United States, 1774-1881*, 118.
- Dewey, Melvil, 126, 128-132, 140, 141, 147.
- Dexter, Samuel, 8.
- Dickens, Charles, 56.
- Dickerson, Mahlon, 31, 34-35.



Dix, Dorothea Lynde, 66.  
 Dockery, Alexander Monroe, 133, 147.  
 Documents, 118, 171-172, 213.  
 Dodd, Edwin D., 77.  
 Douette-Richardot, Nicholas, 14.  
 Douglas, Stephen A., 56.  
 Duane, William, 14, 116.  
 Dudley, William Wade, 71.  
 Durazzo Library, 49.

## E

Easby, William, 62.  
 Eaton, John H., 37.  
 Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation, 195-196, 198-201; established, 195-196; 198-201.  
 Elliot, Jonathan, 43.  
 Elliot, William, 59.  
 Elson, Bertha C., 201.  
 Elson, Louis C., 201.  
 Embossed and Talking Books, *see* Books for the Adult Blind Division.  
 Emerson, John M., 69.  
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 56, 78.  
 Engel, Carl, 200.  
 Erving, George William, 13.  
*Essex Register*, 25.  
 Esty, Alexander, 122, 124.  
 Ethnology, Bureau of, 175.  
 Evans, Luther Harris, Librarian of Congress (1945- ), 215.  
 Evans, Thomas, 8.  
 Evarts, William Maxwell, 110.  
 Everett, Edward, 34, 36, 39.  
 Exchange of Publications, 49-55, 104-106, 148-151, 172; Smithsonian Institution, 104; foreign documents, 105-106, 148-151; 1899, 172.

## F

Fagnani, Giuseppe, 66.  
 Falkner, Roland P., 178.  
 Farrow, Samuel, 19.  
 Ferguson, Milton J., 208.  
 Fess, Simeon D., 148.  
 Fillmore, Millard, 7, 79.  
 Finance, 179 (1904).  
 Fires, 15, 34, 59-64, 101-102, 116; 1814, 15; 1825, 34; 1851, 59-64; Smithsonian, 1865, 101-102; Capitol, 1898, 116.  
 Fish, Hamilton, 136.  
 Fish Commission, 175.  
 Fisk, James, 20.  
 Fiske Free and Public Library, New Orleans, 178.  
 Flanagan, John, 146.  
 Fletcher, William I., 130, 132.  
 Force, Peter, 58, 106-108, 127.  
 Forsyth, John, 18.

*Fortune*, 209.  
*Forum*, 142.  
 Foster, Dwight, 6.  
 Fox, Charles James, 11.  
 France, libraries, 46, 50.  
 Franklin, Benjamin, 4, 110, 179.  
 Freer Gallery, 196.  
 Fremont, John C., 79.  
 French, Benjamin B., 88.  
 Friedenwald, Herbert, 143, 152.  
 Fromentin, Eligius, 30.  
 Fugitive Slave Law, 78-79.  
 Fuller, Melville W., 144.  
 Fulton, Robert, 127.

## G

Gaillard, John, 29.  
 Gallatin, Albert, 6.  
 Gardiner Greene Hubbard Collection, 113, 163, 171, 188, 195.  
*Gazette of the United States*, 2.  
 General Accounting Office, 210.  
 General Education Board, 203.  
 George, Henry, 145.  
 Germany, libraries, 42, 46, 50.  
 Gerolt, Baron, 65.  
 Gerry, Eldridge, 1, 5, 39.  
 Gertrude Clarke Whittall Foundation, 200-201.  
 Gifts, 14-15, 112, 196-198, 214; Trust Fund Board created, 196-198.  
 Gill, Theodore N., 103.  
 Gilmor, Robert, 10.  
 Goldsborough, Robert Henry, 16, 18, 30.  
 Government Printing Office, 85, 112; first general catalog, 1864, 85.  
 Grant, Ulysses Simpson, 75, 111, 137.  
 Graphic Arts, *see* Prints and Photographs Division.  
 Greeley, Horace, 136.  
 Green, Bernard R., 126, 130, 132, 138, 166.  
 Green, Duff, 37.  
 Gribbsby, Hugh Blair, 11.  
 Griffin, Appelon P. C., 145, 157; Chief Assistant Librarian, 186.  
 Griffin, Etta Josselyn, 155.  
 Grosvenor, Thomas Peabody, 18, 19.  
 Grundy, Felix, 39.  
 Guggenheim, Daniel, *see* Daniel Guggenheim Fund.  
*Guides to Current Materials*, 214.  
 Guittard, Claude B., 180.  
 Guizot, François Pierre, 54.

## H

Hale, Charles, 58.  
 Halstead, Murat, 77, 166.  
 Hamburg, Germany, exchange of material, 105.

Hamilton, Alexander, 179.  
 Hamlin, Hannibal, 65.  
 Hancock, John, 59.  
 Hanna, Marcus Alonzo, 145.  
 Hansbrough, Henry Clay, 136, 168.  
 Hanson, Alexander Contee, 20, 63.  
 Hanson, James Christian, 117, 144-145, 166.  
 Hardenbergh, Augustus Albert, 111.  
 Harding, Warren G., 192.  
 Harmer, James B., 143.  
 Harper, Robert Goodloe, 5, 8.  
*Harper's Monthly (Harper's New Monthly)*, 7, 87, 108.  
*Harper's Weekly*, 142.  
 Harrison, William Henry, 56.  
 Hawkins, Joseph H., 18.  
 Hay, John, 168.  
 Hayes, Rutherford B., 77.  
 Hayes, Rutherford P., 130, 132.  
 Hegeman, Annie May, 202.  
 Henry, Joseph, 100, 104.  
 Henry, Patrick, 44.  
 Henry Kirke Porter Memorial Fund, *see* Hegeman, Annie May.  
 Hillhouse, James, 6.  
 Hispanic Foundation, 202, 213.  
*Historical Alabama*, 144.  
 Hitchcock, Ethan A., 149.  
 Hoar, George Frisbie, 110, 162, 169.  
 Hoban, James, 27.  
 Holman, William Steele, 125.  
 Hopkinson, Joseph, 30.  
 House of Commons Library, 41.  
 House of Lords Library, 41.  
 Howe, Henry, 76.  
 Howe, Timothy O., 95, 122.  
 Hubbard, Gardiner Greene, 113, 162, *see also* Gardiner Greene Hubbard Collection.  
 Hubbard, (Mrs.) Gertrude M., 163; Trust Fund, 188; *see also* Gardiner Greene Hubbard Collection.  
 Hughes, Charles Evans, 191.  
 Hulbert, John Whitefield, 20.  
 Hunt, Alice C., 154.  
 Hunt, Gaillard, 186, 191.  
 Hunter, William, 30.  
 Huntington, Archer Milton, 202-203.  
 Hutcheson, David, 142, 153-155, 157, 166.

## I

Illinois University, Urbana, Ill., 178.  
*Indiana Business Directory*, 71.  
 Ingersoll, Robert G., 142.  
*Inheritance Tax*, 146.  
 Interlibrary loans, 48, 159, 175-177, 214.  
 International Congress of Librarians, 141.  
 Irving, Washington, 44, 54.

## J

Jackson, Andrew, 25, 36, 59, 83.  
 Jahr, Torstein, 178.  
 James, Charles Tillinghast, 69.  
 Japanese literature, 185, 190.  
 Jardin des Plantes, 51.  
 Jefferson, Thomas, 10, 11, 45, 59, 63, 110, 148-149, 179.  
 Jefferson Library, purchase, 16-26; fire, 61-66.  
 Jenckes, Thomas A., 92, 94.  
 Jewett, Charles Coffin, 57-58, 101.  
 John Crerar Library, Chicago, 178.  
 Johns Hopkins University Library, Baltimore, Md., 178.  
 Johnson, Andrew, 80, 88.  
 Johnson, Reverdy, 86.  
 Johnson, Richard Mentor, 16, 34.  
 Johnston, William Dawson, 7-8, 86, 117.  
 Jones, Beebe & Company, 67.  
 Jones, John Paul, 127.  
 Jones, John W., 60.  
*Journal des Débats*, 127.  
*Journal of Social Science*, 108.  
*Journals of the Continental Congress*, 112, 181.  
 Juvenile Room (Boston Public Library), 169.

## K

Kenyon, Sir Frederic, 205.  
 Keynes, John Maynard, 191.  
 Kimball, Arthur R., 145, 151.  
 King, Cyrus, 19.  
 King, Josias Wilson, 11.  
 King, William, R. 61.  
 Knapp, Samuel Lorenzo, 42.  
 Kneass, Napoleon B., 154.  
 Koch, Theodore Wesley, 180.  
 Krüss, Hugo Andres, 205.

## L

Lafayette, Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert Molier, 54, 63.  
 Lafon, B., 14.  
 Lamar, Lucius Quintus C., 125.  
 Lambdin, James Reid, 65.  
 Lane, Henry S., 71, 83.  
 Lane, William Coolidge, 166-167.  
 Langley, Samuel P., 127.  
 Lanman, Charles, 86.  
 Larner, Michael, 27.  
 La Salle, Rene Robert, 109.  
*Latter Day Luminary*, 37.  
 Laurentian Library, Florence, Italy, 178.  
 Law Library, 39, 61, 72, 75, 84-85, 141, 144, 161, 171, 213; founded 39; in 1861, 84-85; in 1898 and 1899, 144, 161, 171.



- Lear, Tobias, 4.  
 Legislative Reference Service, 187-188, 190, 213;  
   created, 187-188, 190.  
 Leikind, Morris C., 102.  
 Leipzig, Germany, 50.  
 L'Enfant, Pierre Charles, 1.  
 Lewis, Joseph, Jr., 19.  
 Librarian of Congress, 11, 15, 26, 36, 70, 76, 86,  
   94-95, 132-136, 141, 143, 157, 168-169, 205-  
   207, 215; incumbents: Beckley, 1801-1807, 11;  
   Magruder, 1807-1815, 15; Watterston, 1815-  
   1829, 26; Meehan, 1829-1861, 36; Stephenson,  
   1861-1864, 70; Spofford, 1865-1897, 76, 86;  
   Young, 1897-1899, 136; Putnam, 1899-1939,  
   168-169; MacLeish, 1939-1944, 207; Evans,  
   1945——, 215.  
 Librarian's Annual Reports, 71-73, 89, 91-92,  
   97-99, 101, 104-106, 108-109, 111-112, 114,  
   119-120, 122, 125, 158-160, 162, 164, 198, 210.  
*Libraries as Political Offices*, 166.  
*Library Act of May 26, 1824*, 34.  
 Library Buildings, in 1897, 147.  
*Library Journal*, 131-132, 137, 141-142; 145, 166,  
   176; National Library, 131-132, 176; Hutchin-  
   son, 142-145; *Libraries as Political Offices*, 166;  
   Spofford, 131, 137; Young, 141, 164.  
 Library Manual, 174.  
 "Library Now Ready," 145.  
*Library of Congress, A Chapter in the Unwritten History*  
*of*, 165-166.  
 Library of Congress, proposed, 2; founded, 5-7,  
   12-13; charter, 10; name, 8, 29, 42, 55, 62;  
   international aspect and relations, 8, 38, 49,  
   104-105, 109, 148; location, 27, 30, 34, 46, 56,  
   58, 66-69, 88-89, 104-105, 115-116, 120-123,  
   138-140, 148; rules governing use, 35, 38-39,  
   41, 58, 70, 109, 147; organization, 1940, 210-211;  
   objectives, 211-214; *see also* Adams, James T.;  
   Catalogs; Congress; Copyright; Exchange;  
   Fires; Force; Jefferson; Trust Fund Board.  
*Library of Congress, Three Eras in the*, 87.  
*Library of Congress as a National Library*, 182.  
*Library Quarterly*, 166, 204, 210; consultants (Put-  
   nam), 204; organization of the Library (Mac-  
   Leish), 210; Putnam appointment (Solberg),  
   166.  
 Lieber, Francis, 42.  
 Lincoln, Abraham, 70, 75-80, 87, 130.  
 Lippincott, J. B., and Company, 74.  
*Literary Club of Cincinnati*, 77-78, 80-83.  
 Livermore, Samuel, 6, 7.  
 Livingston, Robert R., 13.  
 Lloyd, James, 6.  
 Lodge, Henry Cabot, 168.  
*London Gazette*, 127.  
*London Times*, 127.  
 Long, Crawford W., 56.  
 Long, John Davis, 152, 167-168.  
 Longworth, Nicholas, 200.  
 Louis-Napoléon, 56-57.  
 Luce, Robert, 205-206.  
 Ludington, Marshall Independence, 152.  
 Lyell, Sir Charles, 68.  
 Lynn, David, 207.
- M
- McClellan, George Brinton, 82.  
 McClure, Alexander K., 137.  
 McDowell, Irwin, 81.  
 McDowell, William C., 77.  
 Macfarland, Henry Brown Floyd, 166.  
 McGill University Library, Montreal, 178.  
 McKenney, James H., 137.  
 McKinley, William, 136-137, 147, 164-168.  
 McLane, Louis, 32.  
 MacLeish, Archibald, Librarian of Congress  
   (1939-1944), 207-215.  
 McMaster, John Bach, 144.  
 McMillan, James, 125.  
 MacMonnies, Frederick, 137.  
 Macon, Nathaniel, 24.  
 Madison, Dolly Payne, 130.  
 Madison, James, 14, 26, 110, 179.  
 Magruder, Patrick, Librarian of Congress (1807-  
   1815), 15-16.  
 Mail, 91, 172.  
 Manuscripts Division, 143, 152, 171, 186, 202,  
   213; acquisitions and acquisition policy, 152,  
   186; established, 141, 171; Friedenwald, first  
   head, 143; gifts, 202.  
 Manuscripts, expert required for treatment of,  
   109; Library as the repository for, 110; depart-  
   ment suggested, 111, 141; established, 171.  
 Maps Division, 141, 160-161, 171-172, 213;  
   processing original collection, 160-161, 171-172;  
   proposed, 141.  
 Marcy, William Learned, 39, 107.  
 Margry, Pierre, 109.  
 Martel, Charles, 145.  
 Mason, William E., 142.  
 Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cam-  
   bridge, Mass., 178.  
 Massachusetts State Library, Boston, 178.  
 Mearns, David Chambers, 1.  
 Mechanics Institute Library, San Francisco, 178.  
 Meehan, Charles H. W., 56-57, 84.  
 Meehan, John Silva, Librarian of Congress (1829-  
   1861), 36-38, 43, 56-57, 60-66, 68-70, 72,  
   83, 101.  
 Meigs, Montgomery C., 124.  
 Meredith, Solomon, 71.

Metternich, Klemens Wenzel, Prince von, 53.  
 Miller, Dayton C., 201.  
 Miller, William, 77.  
 Minneapolis Athenaeum, 169.  
 Minnesota University Library, Minneapolis, 178.  
*Miscellaneous Collections* (Smithsonian Institution), 101, 103.  
 Mitchell, Samuel Latham, 13-14.  
 Monroe, James, 110, 179.  
 Montglave, Eugene de, 54.  
 Montgomery, James, 52.  
 Moore, George H., 107.  
 Moore, Willard, 146.  
 Mordwinoff, Alexandre de, 54.  
 Morel, Eugene, 186.  
 Morgan, J. Pierpont, 189.  
 Morison, Samuel Eliot, 3.  
 Mornington, Margaret Jones, 37.  
 Morrill, Justin S., 124.  
 Morrison, Hugh, 146, 157.  
 Morrison, John, 146, 157.  
 Morse, James H., 169.  
 Morse, Samuel F. B., 54.  
 Mortimer, W. Golden, 149.  
 Morton, Oliver P., 77.  
 Moultrie, William, 59, 63.  
 Munich, Library of, 50.  
 Munn, Ralph, 209.  
*Munsey's*, 142.  
 Murphy, Henry C., 107.  
 Music. Collection in 1861, 127; in 1899, 172; department proposed, 141, 171; Whittlesey appointed, 143.  
 Music Division, 179, 195-201.

## N

*Nation*, 142.  
 National Archives, 212.  
 National Education Association, 141.  
 National Geographic Society, 163.  
*National Intelligencer*, 31, 35, 43, 60, 71.  
 National Library, 2, 7, 18, 31, 83-84, 86, 100, 102, 106, 112, 114, 116, 119, 123, 125, 128, 131, 133, 142, 147, 149, 154-155, 166, 170-171, 174-182, 189, 193, 205, 207; articles: *Library Journal*, 131, 133, 142, 176; *National Intelligencer*, 31; general statements, 2, 18, 83-84, 86, 106, 116, 147, 174-175; individual statements: Choate, 100, Davis, 142, Dewey, 128, 147, Dockery, 133, Fess, 148, Hitchcock, 149, Lane, 166, Luce, 205, 207, Mason, 142, Morgan, 189, Poore, 7, Putnam, 170-171, 176-177, 180-182, 193, Roosevelt, Theodore, 176, Spofford, 102, 112, 114, 119, 125, Voorhees, 123, Winter, 148, Young, 148, 154-155.  
*National Library*, 31.

*National Library: Its Work and Functions*, 176.  
 National Museum, 102, 175.  
 Navy Department, 6.  
 Nebraska University Library, Lincoln, Nebr., 178.  
*New Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*, 36.  
*New York Evening Post*, 72.  
*New York Herald*, 72-137.  
 New York Historical Society, 107.  
 New York Public Library, 155, 178, 194.  
 New York Society Library, 4.  
 New York State Library, Albany, 140-141, 178.  
*New York Times*, 76, 215.  
*New York Tribune*, 72, 137, 148, 164.  
*New York World*, 143.  
 Newberry Library, 144-145.  
 Newspapers, collection of, in 1861, 127.  
 Nicholas, Wilson Cary, 8, 10.  
 Nicholas Longworth Foundation, 200.  
 Nicholson, Joseph Hopper, 10-11.  
 Nieman Foundation for Contemporary Journalism, 209.  
*Notices of Public Libraries in the United States of America*, 57-58.  
 Nourse, Joseph, 13.

## O

Oakley, Thomas Jackson, 18-19.  
 Objectives of the Library of Congress, 211-214.  
 Office of Education, 181.  
 Office of Facts and Figures, 214.  
 Office of Strategic Services, Research and Analysis Branch, 214.  
 Office of War Information, 214.  
 Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 176.  
 O'Neale, Peggy, 37.  
 Order of Bolivar, of Venezuela, 143.  
 Orientalia Division, 168, 213.  
 Otis, Harrison Gray, 5.  
 Otis, Samuel A., 10.  
*Outlook*, 142.

## P

Palmer, Frank W., 94-95.  
 Panizzi, Sir Anthony, 75.  
 Paris, libraries, 46, 12.  
 Parker, Theodore, 78.  
 Parliament, libraries of, 41.  
 Partridge, Sarah, 76.  
 Patents and Patent Office Committee, 90, 92-94, 97-98, 108, 111.  
 Pawson and Nicholson, 74.  
 Pearce, James Alfred, 60, 74, 100.  
 Pepper, Charles M., 166.  
 Peirce, C. S., 176.  
 Pennell, Joseph, 202.  
 Pennsylvania University Library, Philadelphia, 178.



Pepper, George Wharton, 200.  
 Periodical department, 141, 143, 171.  
 Perkins Institution for the Blind, 153-154.  
 Perley, Clarence Warner, 180.  
 Personnel, 126, 128-130, 134-136, 141, 173, 179.  
 Personnel Classification Board, 193.  
 Peter Force Collection, 58, 106-108, 127.  
 Peters, C. F., 179.  
 Peters, John A., 94-95.  
 Peters, Richard, 42.  
 Philadelphia Free Library, 178.  
 Philadelphia Library Company, 8.  
 Philadelphia Museum of Art, 51.  
*Philadelphia Press*, 136.  
 Philadelphia Public Library, 155.  
 Phillips, Philip Lee, 143, 160.  
 Piatt, Donn, 77, 81.  
 Pickering, Timothy, 19.  
 Pierson and Wilson, architects, 207.  
*Plan for Stereotyping Catalogues by Separate Titles*, 101.  
 Poinsett, Joel R., 32, 54.  
 Policy, *see* Objectives of the Library of Congress, 211-214.  
 Polk, James K., 56.  
 Pomeroy, Samuel Clarke, 96.  
 Poole's *Index*, 147.  
 Poore, Benjamin Perley, 7-8, 118.  
 Porter, John Addison, 166.  
 Potter, M. D., and Company, 79.  
 Poulson, Zachariah, 65.  
 Powell, Lazarus W., 80.  
 Powell, Leven, 8.  
 Preparation of Materials, 141, 144-145, 171-173.  
 Preston, William Campbell, 44.  
 Prints, 171-172.  
 Prints and Photographs Division, 202.  
 Procter, John R., 141.  
 Pruden, Oscar L., 125.  
 Publications policy, 181.  
 Putnam, George Palmer, 169.  
 Putnam, Herbert, Librarian of Congress (1899-1939); 76, 116, 126, 128, 132, 138, 143, 167-171, 176-180, 203-204, 207.  
 Putnam, Victorine Haven, 169.

## Q

Quigg, Lemuel Ely, 126, 147.  
 Quincy, Josiah, 14.

## R

Rahway Public Library, 176.  
 Randall, William Harrison, 125.  
 Randolph, John, 5, 10, 24.  
 Randolph, Peyton, 59.  
 Rapine, Daniel, 14.  
 Rare Books Division, 206.

Reader and Reference Service, 102, 145, 154-157, 173-174, 212-214; 1897, 145, evening service, 155-157; 1900, periodical service, 173-174.  
 Recording Laboratory, 201.  
 Reed, John, 18.  
 Reed, Thomas Brackett, 124.  
 Reference Department, 212-214.  
 Register of Copyrights, 125, 134; Solberg appointed, 143.  
*Relation of the National Library to Historical Research in the United States*, 177.  
 Reports, *see* Congress. House Committee on the Library; Congress. Joint Committee on the Library; Congress. Senate Committee on the Library; Congress, Library Committees of; Librarian, annual; Smithsonian, annual; Special.  
*Review of Reviews*, 142.  
*Revista delle Biblioteche*, 178.  
 Rhea, John, 20.  
 Riaño, Juan, 203.  
 Rich, Obadiah, 43, 65.  
 Robbins, Joseph, 166.  
 Robertson, Thomas Bolling, 18.  
 Rochambeau, Marquis de, 110, 127.  
 Rochambeau Collection, 110.  
 Rockefeller, John D., Jr., 183, 194.  
 Rockhill, William Woodville, 166-168.  
 "Roger Williams Year Book," 146.  
 Roland-Marcel, Pierre René, 205.  
 Rome, Vatican Library, 46.  
 Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 207.  
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 145, 176, 179.  
 Ross, James, 6.  
 Rouelle, Louis Henri, 15.  
 Rowell, Joseph Cummings, 159.  
 Royal Geographical Society, London, 66, 143.  
 Royall, Anne, 26, 38, 62.  
 Rudolph, Alexander J., 144.  
 Rush, Richard, 32.  
 Ruskin, John, 127.  
 Russell, Charles Edward, *see* Charles Edward Russell Collection.  
 Russia, exchange of publications, 105, 149-155, 184.  
 Rutledge, John, Jr., 5.

## S

St. Louis Public Library, 178.  
 St. Petersburg, Imperial Library, 46, 50, 123.  
 Salaries, 103, 134-135, 205.  
 Schurz, Carl, 123.  
*Scientific American*, 142.  
 Scott, Walter, 52.  
*Scribner's*, 142.

- Seward, William E., 78.  
 Seybert, Adam, 18.  
 Shaw, Norton, 66.  
 Shaw, Robert K., 180.  
 Shea, John Gilmary, 109.  
 Shelf list, 172.  
 Sheridan, Philip Henry, 75.  
 Sherman, John, 125, 149.  
 Sherman, William Tecumseh, 75.  
*Simplicity as a Test for Truth*, 169.  
 Singleton, Otho Robards, 122.  
 Slauson, Allen B., 143.  
 Smith, Caleb B., 71, 83.  
 Smith, Samuel, 6.  
 Smith, Samuel Harrison, 16.  
 Smithmeyer, John L., 122, 124-125.  
 Smithson, James, 99-101.  
 Smithsonian Annual Reports, 101; 1846, 101; 1850, 101.  
 Smithsonian Institution, 57, 58, 99, 104, 151; publications, 57-58, reports, 101.  
 Solberg, Thorvald, 143, 165-166.  
 Sonneck, Oscar G., 200.  
 Soule, Charles Carroll, 132.  
 Spain, exchange of publications, 105.  
 Sparks, Jared, 36, 66.  
*Special Report of the Librarian of Congress to the Joint Committee on the Library Concerning the Historical Library of Peter Force Esq.*, 107.  
 Special Reports, 107, 114, 150, 170, 171, 174, 176, 184, 193; 1867, 107; 1896, 114; 1898, 150; 1896, 170-171; 1901, 174, 176; 1907, 184; 1924, 193.  
 Spofford, Ainsworth Rand, Librarian of Congress (1865-1897), 15, 28, 73, 76-80, 82-83, 96, 100, 103, 107, 113-117, 119-120, 125, 131, 137-138, 157, 185; appointed 76-80; Chief Assistant Librarian, 137, 142.  
 Spofford, (Reverend) Luke Ainsworth, 76.  
 Sprague, Albert, 195.  
 Sprigg, Mrs. B., 130.  
 Stanton, Richard Henry, 61.  
 State Department, 6, 105, 179.  
 Statistics, 73, 85, 174.  
 Stelle, Edward B., 35-36, 83.  
 Stephenson, John G., Librarian of Congress (1861-1864), 70-71, 73-75, 82-83.  
 Stephenson, Reuben H., 83.  
 Steuben, Frederick William von, 59.  
 Stevens, Aaron F., 95.  
 Stevens, Benjamin Franklin, 183.  
 Stevens, Henry, 66, 110.  
 Story, Joseph, 39.  
 Story Up To Now, "The Peace of Great Phantoms Be for You", 1-2; "Our Union Does Not Require It", 3-4; "Of Furnishings, Footways and Foundations", 4-8; "Eleven Hair Trunks and A Case for the Maps", 8-9; "God Send the Good Ship to Her Desired Port", 9-12 "Take Care, Hold the Wagon Back!", 12-13; "A Becoming Display of Erudition . . . A Brighter Lustre to Truth", 13-15; "Second Blooming", 15-16; "The Substratum of a Great National Library"—followed by the tabulation recording the voting on Thomas Jefferson Library acquisition, 16-25; "The Union of the Love of Liberty and Knowledge", 25-30; "A Region of Learning", 30-34; "Light in the Library", 34-36; "Amiable Gentleman", 36-41; "The Aggregate Intelligence of the Citizens", 41-49; "This Federal Union of Intelligence", 49-56; "Whims of Congresses and Congressmen", 56-59; "Flues, Furnaces and Futility", 59-67; "The Carpet", 67-75; "The Third Thrust", 75-125; "The Hearing", 125-130; "Si Monumentum Requirit Circumspice", 130-136; "His Own Office Boy", 136-138; "Chutes, Whip Tackle, Handbarrows and the Crossing", 138-140; "By Reason of Special Aptitude", 140-145; "Library Now Ready" 145-147; "A Short Essay on Shakespearean Indifference", 147-148; "In the Interest of the National Library", 148-153; "Under the Hands of God", 153-155; "Congress Throws Open to the People", 155-158; "The Circulating Library Business", 158-159; "Obstacles Unequalled", 159-162; "The Great Beginner", 162-164; "First Rank Librarian", 164-192; "Not Less Than the Best Obtainable", 192-194; "The Apparatus Is Enlarged", 194-195; "Hereby Authorized to Accept", 195-204; "To the Complete Satisfaction of Congress", 204-206; "Librarian Emeritus", 206-207; "The Brush of the Comet", 207-215.  
 Strohm, Adam, 178.  
 Stuart, George, 59.  
 Stuart, Gilbert, 59.  
 Stuttgart Library, 46.  
 Subscription library, 2.  
 Sumner, Charles, 90.  
 Sweden, exchange of publications, 105.  
 Swingle, Walter T., 190.
- T
- Taft, Alphonso, 77.  
 Taft, William Howard, 77, 189.  
 Talking Books, 155.  
 Tancy, Roger B., 85.  
 T'ang Shao-Yi, 186.  
 Tappan, Benjamin, 100.  
 Taylor, John W., 30.



Taylor, Zachary, 86.  
 Tazewell, Littleton Waller, 11.  
 Templeman, George, 43.  
 Texas, University of, Austin, 178.  
 Thomas, Lorenzo, 75.  
 Thomas, Mary E., 142.  
 Thompson, Jane, 43.  
 Thompson, Pishey, 43.  
*Three Eras in the Library of Congress*, 87.  
*Time*, 208.  
*To-Day, A Boston Literary Journal*, 58.  
 Toner, Joseph Meredith, 112-113, 127.  
 Toner Collection, 112-114.  
 "Topical Index", 118.  
 Townsend, George Alfred, 166.  
 Tracy, Uriah, 10.  
 Treasury Department, weekly catalog of publications entered for copyright, 125.  
 Tree, Lambert, 106.  
 Tregaskiss, John, 166.  
 Trentanove, Gaetano, 163.  
 Trenton Public Library, 178.  
 Trowbridge, Alexander G., 207.  
 Truman, E. D., 76.  
 Truman, Elizabeth, 76.  
 Truman and Spofford, 76, 83.  
 Trust Fund Board, 195-198, 202; authorization, 195; gifts, 202.  
 Tucker, Henry St. George, 30.  
 Tyler, John, 56, 59, 65.  
 Tyler, Robert Ogden, 81.

## U

Union Catalog, 129, 194-195, 206, 214; national service, 129; statistics, 194-195.  
*The Unitarian Review*, 169.  
 United Nations Organization, 215.  
*United States Magazine*, 1856, 69.  
*United States Telegraph*, 37.  
 United States Treasury, 198.

## V

Van Buren, Martin, 56.  
 Vance, John Thomas, 202.  
 Van Ness, John P., 37.  
 Vatican Library, Rome, 46.  
 Vattemare, Alexandre, 52-56.  
 Vattemare, Hippolyte, 53.  
 Verplanck, Gulian C., 54.  
 Vesputius, Americus, 59.  
 Victor, Orville J., 166.  
 Vienna, Imperial Library, 46, 50.  
 Viennese Brazilian Museum, 50.  
 Vincent, Sergeant, 34.  
 Voorhees, Daniel W., 112, 115.  
 Vote in Congress authorizing the purchase of the Jefferson Library, table, 21-24.

## W

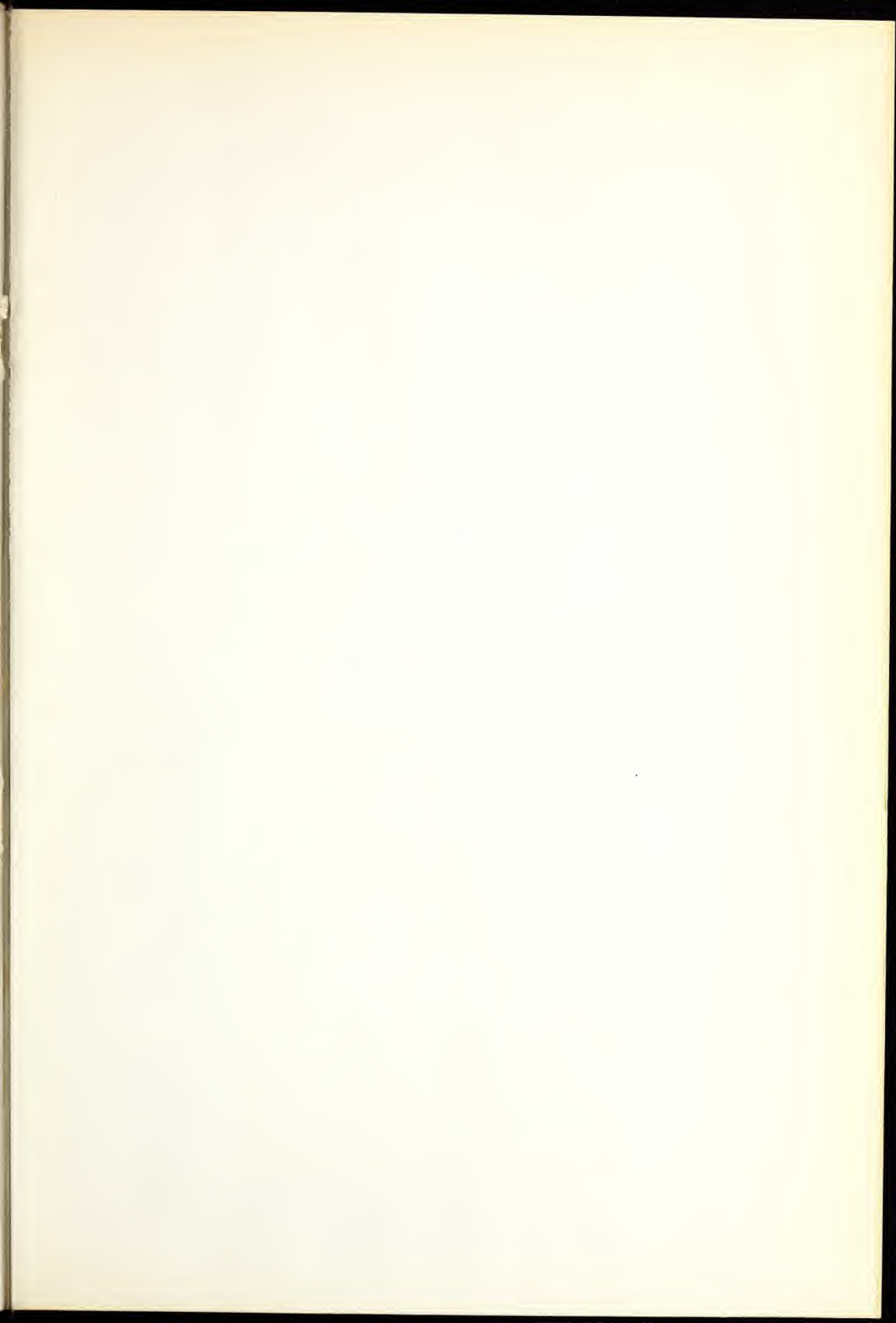
Waln, Robert, 8.  
 Walter, Thomas U., 61, 66-68, 73, architect, 61; design of library, 66-68, 73.  
 War Agencies Collection, 214.  
 War Department, 6.  
 War of 1812, 15, 25.  
*War Service Bulletins*, 214.  
 Ward, John Quincy Adams, 113.  
 Warren, (Mrs.) Mercy, 14.  
 Washington, George, 4, 59, 110, 112, 127, 179.  
*Washington Daily Evening Star*, 69, 145, 146.  
*Washington Gazette*, 37.  
*Washington News*, 60, 67.  
*Washington Sunday Morning Chronicle*, 74.  
 Watterson, Henry, 166.  
 Watterston, George, Librarian of Congress (1815-1829), 26, 36, 38.  
 Webber, A. S., 14.  
 Webster, Daniel, 20, 30, 35.  
 Wells, Herbert George, 183.  
 Wells, William, 14.  
 Wentworth, Sir John, 7.  
 West, Max, 146.  
 Wetmore, George Peabody, 126, 150.  
*What Can Be Done for Libraries By the Nation*, 177.  
 White, Alexander, 1-2.  
 Whittlesey, Walter R., 143.  
 Wickliffe, Charles Anderson, 39.  
 Wigfall, Louis T., 80.  
 Wilbour, Joshua, 150.  
 Wilbur, James Benjamin, 202.  
 Wilde, Richard Henry, 43.  
 Willey, Waitman Thomas, 96.  
 Winter, William, 148.  
 Wirt, William, 8, 36.  
 Wisconsin State Historical Library, Madison, 178.  
 Woodward, Augustus B., 14.  
 World War I, 191.  
 World War II, 209.  
 Wren, Christopher, 131.  
 Wright, Fanny, 30.  
 Wright, (Reverend) George, 4.  
 Wright, Robert, 18, 20.  
 Wu Ting-fang, 162.

## Y

Young, John Russell, Librarian of Congress (1897-1899), 136-137, 140-145, 148-149, 163-164.  
 Young, (Mrs.) John Russell, (May Dow Davids), 153, 155.  
 Yudin, Gennadius Vasilievich, 184.

## Z

Zoological Park, 175.







782

MEARNS

AUTHOR

The story up to now: the

TITLE

Library of Congress, 1800-1946

DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME	DATE RETURNED
FEB 03 1995	Carol Hobbs	MAR 20 1995

782

MEARNS

The story up to now: the Library  
of Congress, 1800-1946

PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY  
AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY



